

Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2020

Published on 25 June 2021



This statistical report describes the latest statistics on occupied and vacant dwellings, second homes, and trends in household types.

In Scotland the number of households is increasing

Over the last 20 years the number of households in Scotland increased by 313,000 (14%).

This is due to an increase in population and a trend towards smaller households.

Number of households



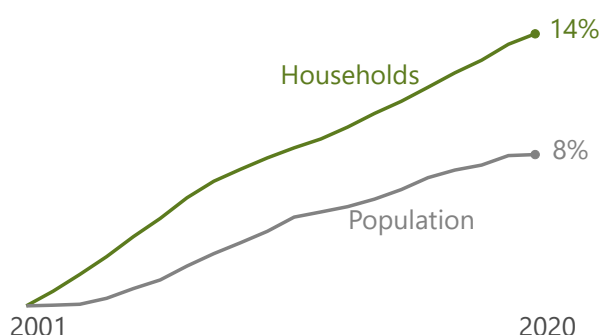
A household is defined as one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address

The number of households has risen faster than population

This is because of changes in the way people are living.

The average number of people per household has fallen.

Percentage change since 2001

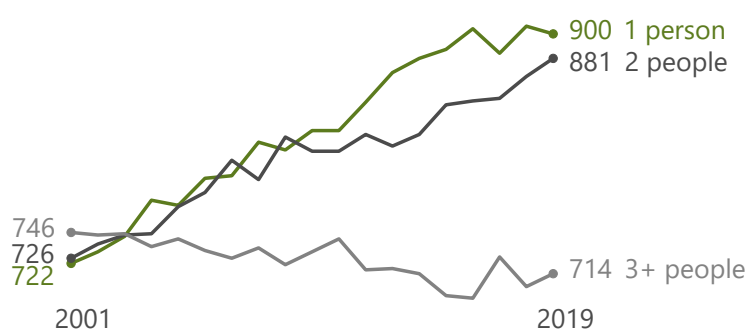


People are increasingly living alone or in smaller households

Around a third of households are just one person living alone.

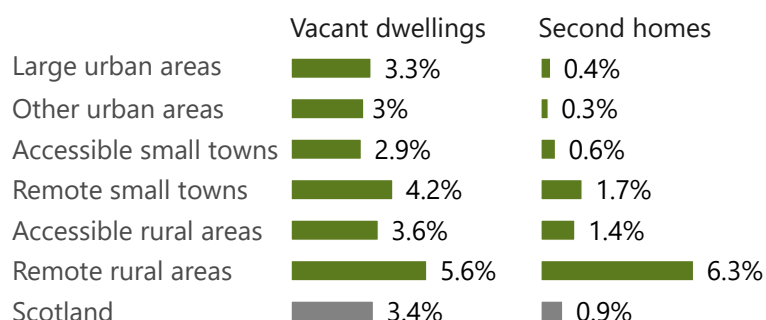
This is partly because Scotland's population is ageing, as older people are more likely to live alone or in smaller households.

Number of households (thousand)



Two or more people households could contain adults or both adults and children

Percentage of empty dwellings and second homes by Urban/Rural classification, 2020

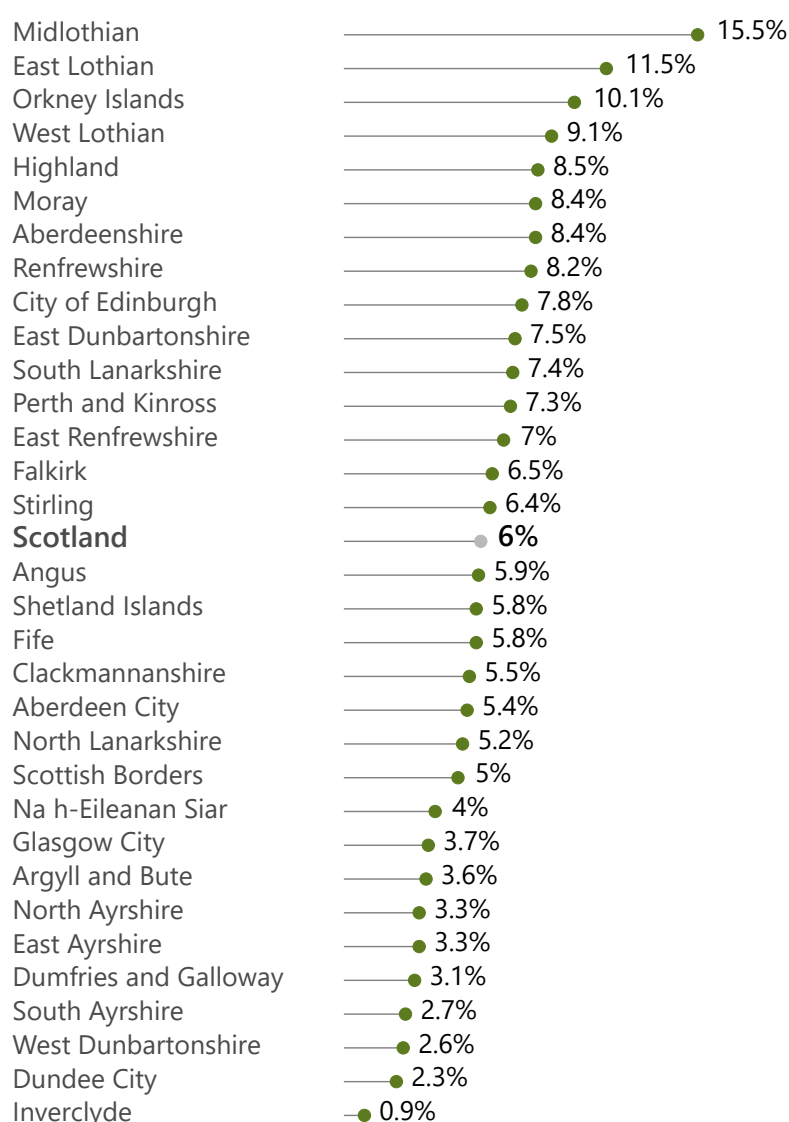


Ninety-six per cent of homes are occupied

There were 2.65 million dwellings in 2020.

Empty and second homes were not spread evenly across the country. Remote rural areas had the highest percentage of dwellings that were vacant or second homes.

Percentage increase in number of households: 2010 - 2020



Growth in household numbers varies across Scotland

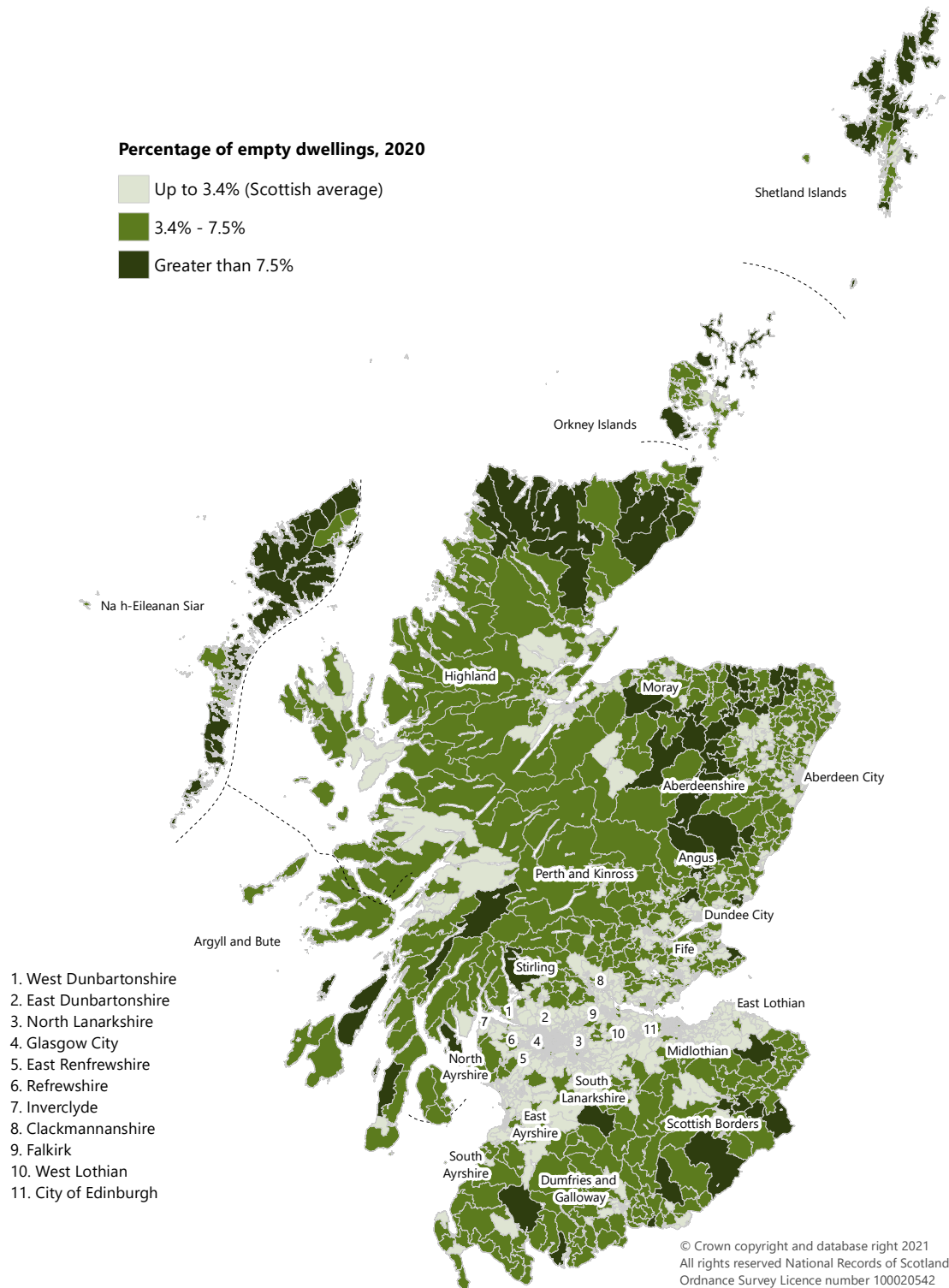
The number of households in Scotland increased by 6% between 2010 and 2020. Each council area recorded an increase.

Midlothian, East Lothian and Orkney Islands had the biggest percentage increases in their household numbers since 2010. Inverclyde, Dundee City and West Dunbartonshire had the smallest increases.

More illustrations of household trends in each council area are available in an [interactive visualisation](#). Information on population change over time by council areas is also available in an [interactive visualisation](#).

The level of vacant dwellings varies across Scotland

The highest proportions of dwellings that are vacant are found in rural areas. Within a council area the proportion of dwellings that are vacant may vary considerably.



The [small area dataset of household estimates](#) which accompany this publication can be used to help to understand changes in the number of households in a local area. This information is also available in an [interactive visualisation](#).

Contents

Main points	6
1 Introduction.....	7
2 National level.....	7
2.1 The number of households and dwellings is increasing in Scotland	7
2.2 Changes in vacant dwellings and second homes	9
2.3 Changes in household size and type	10
2.4 House-building	15
2.5 Comparison to other parts of the UK.....	16
3 Council area level.....	17
3.1 Total numbers of households and dwellings	17
3.2 Average household size.....	20
3.3 Vacant dwellings and second homes.....	21
3.4 Housing density	23
3.5 Characteristics of dwellings.....	23
4 Neighbourhood (data zone) level	23
4.1 Vacant dwellings and second homes.....	23
4.2 'Single adult' discounts	28
4.3 Occupied dwellings that are exempt from Council Tax	28
5 Other geographies.....	29
5.1 Urban rural classification.....	29
5.2 Strategic Development Plan and National Park areas	29
5.3 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation	31
6 Background information.....	32
7 Related publications and websites	45

Supporting data tables and background data for the Charts for this publication are available on the [NRS website](#).

Main points

- The number of households in Scotland continued to increase in 2020, reaching 2.51 million. This was an increase of 142,800 (6%) since 2010.
- The number of households increased in every council area over the last ten years. The greatest relative increases were in Midlothian (15%), East Lothian (11%) and Orkney Islands (10%).
- Average household size in Scotland decreased from 2.18 people per household in 2010 to 2.14 in 2020. It increased in City of Edinburgh and Glasgow City.
- The growth in the number of households is partly due to an increase in the population, but also because people are increasingly living alone or with fewer other people.
- In 2019 more than a third of households were single person households. An estimated 900,000 people were living alone.
- There were 2.65 million dwellings in Scotland in 2020. Of these, 90,500 dwellings (3%) were vacant and 24,500 (1%) were second homes. The vacant dwellings included 47,300 dwellings classified as long-term (more than six months) empty and 43,200 as unoccupied exemptions (such as new homes yet to be occupied and dwellings undergoing repair or awaiting demolition).
- Empty and second homes are concentrated in different parts of the country. For example, remote rural areas have a higher percentage of empty and second homes than urban areas.

Do these statistics take into account the effect of COVID-19?

These statistics relate to the estimated number of households as at 30 June 2020 and do not take into account changes since then.

Links to resources:

- [Open data](#) (of household projections) showing the number of households by household type and age of household head in each council area.
- Check out our [blog](#) for more information about the range of NRS statistics that are useful for understanding COVID-19.
- Scottish Government analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on [fuel poverty](#) and the [general housing market](#).
- Scottish Housing Regulator [monthly dashboards](#) including information on the impact of COVID-19 on social landlords and their tenants.
- [Research](#) published by the Centre for Population Change analysing household vulnerability – on dimensions of health, employment, housing, finance and digital - to the effects of COVID-19 by household type.

1 Introduction

This publication provides the latest estimates of the number of households and dwellings in Scotland.

These statistics are used for a range of purposes by the Scottish Government, local authorities, other organisations and researchers. These purposes include:

- Housing need and planning of services
- Informing Development Plans and land use allocation

Further information on the use of these statistics, and on the data sources and methodology, is provided in the [Background information](#) section.

What are you looking for?

Where to find it

Council area data used in this publication	→	Data and charts
Small area data on household and dwellings	→	Small Area Statistics
Supporting information about the estimates	→	Background Notes
Households/ dwellings profiles of council areas	→	NRS Council area profiles
Trends of the number of households in council, NP and SDP areas	→	Interactive charts
Comparisons of the occupied and vacant dwellings in small areas	→	Interactive maps

2 National level

2.1 The number of households and dwellings is increasing in Scotland

The number of [households](#) and [dwellings](#) in Scotland has increased by 6.0% and 6.6% respectively, in the last 10 years, as shown in [Figure 1a](#). In 2020 there were 2.51 million households and 2.65 million dwellings in Scotland.

The estimated number of households is based on the number of occupied dwellings. So changes in the number of unoccupied dwellings has an impact on the number of households.

The number of households in Scotland tends to grow every year. After the recession in 2007/8 the rate of growth fell each year until 2012. It then followed a generally upward trend until the latest year, when the increase was the smallest since 2012 ([Figure 1b](#)).

New legislation in 2013 led to reviews and re-classifications of second homes and vacant properties. This may explain the particularly high growth rates in household numbers between 2012 and 2014.

Figure 1a: Increase in households and dwellings, June 2010 to 2020

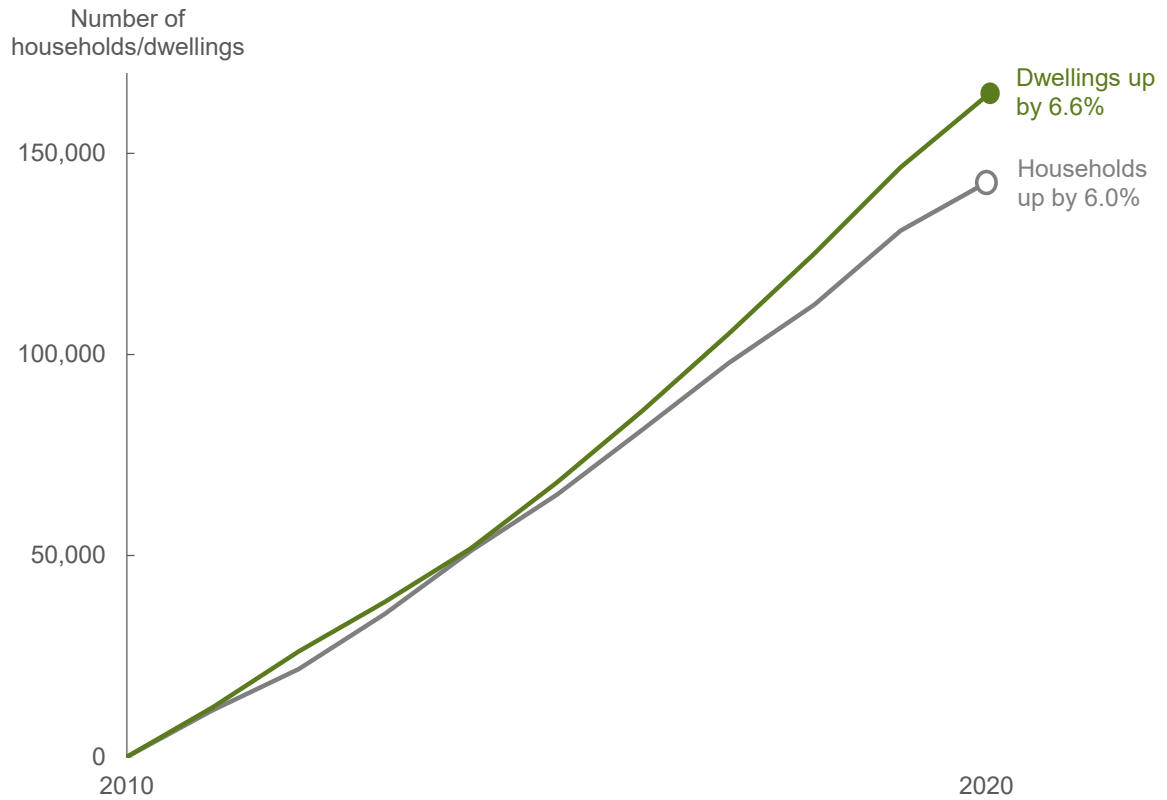
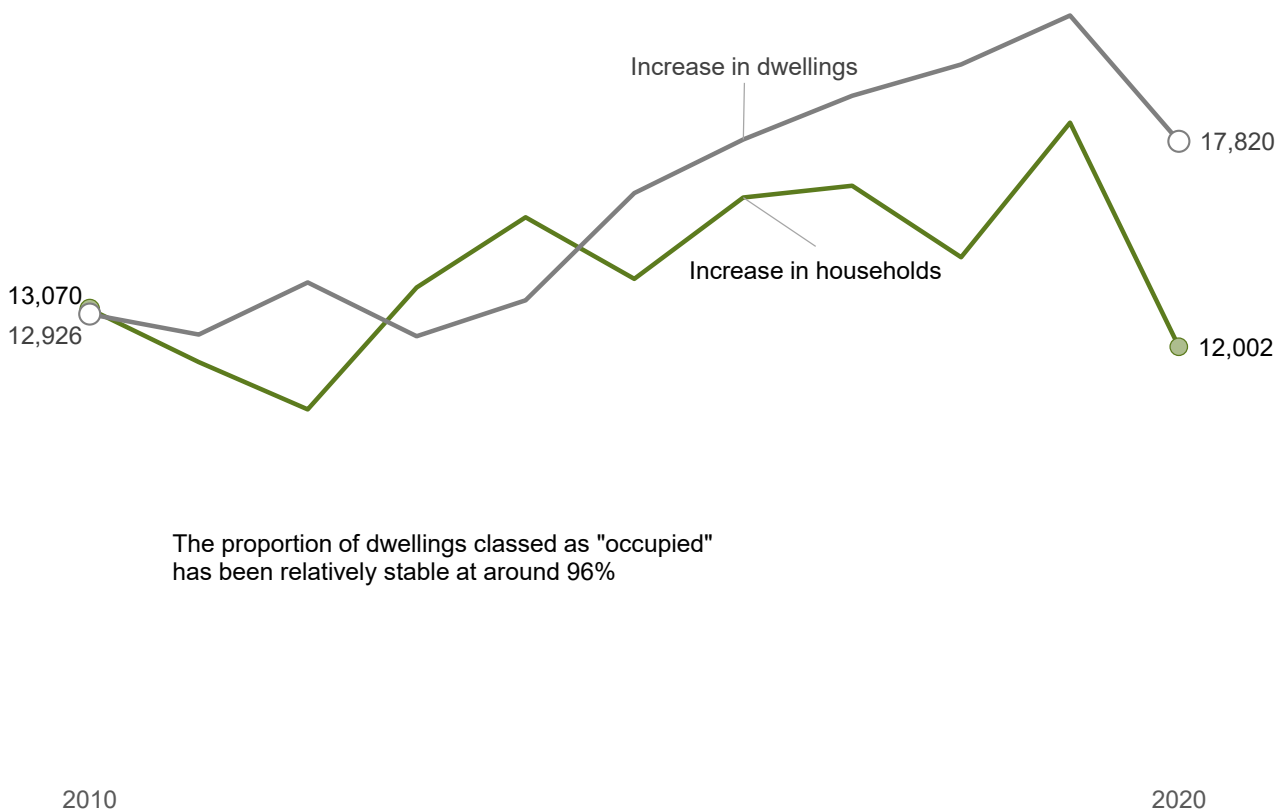


Figure 1b: Changing rate of increase in households and dwellings, June 2010 to 2020



2.2 Changes in vacant dwellings and second homes

Of the 2.65 million dwellings in Scotland in 2020, 115,000 (4.3%) were unoccupied. These unoccupied dwellings include:

- vacant properties (90,500, 3.4% of all dwellings)
- second homes (24,500, 0.9% of all dwellings).

Vacant properties include those classified as:

- long-term (six months or more) empty (47,300, 1.8% of all dwellings)
- unoccupied exemptions (43,200, 1.6% of all dwellings) such as new homes yet to be occupied and dwellings undergoing repair or awaiting demolition.

In 2020 just under two thirds (30,600) of long-term empty dwellings have been empty for 12 months or more¹.

Overall, the number of unoccupied dwellings in Scotland has remained fairly stable over the last few years. However, within this overall picture of little change the number of vacant dwellings has been increasing ([Figure 2](#)). This is mainly due to an increase in long-term empty properties. The number of second homes has been decreasing. From 2019 to 2020:

- the number of long-term empty dwellings increased by 6,300 (15.3%)
- the number of unoccupied exemptions fell by 400 (0.9%)
- the number of second homes was unchanged at 24,500.

The changes in the number of vacant and second homes since 2012 have been due in part to re-classification of such properties. This followed on from legislation introduced by the Scottish Government in 2013. That allowed councils to increase the Council Tax payable on certain empty properties². The aim of this was to encourage the availability of housing to meet the needs of a growing population, by bringing vacant properties back into use. This led to many councils carrying out reviews of empty and second homes with subsequent re-classifications.

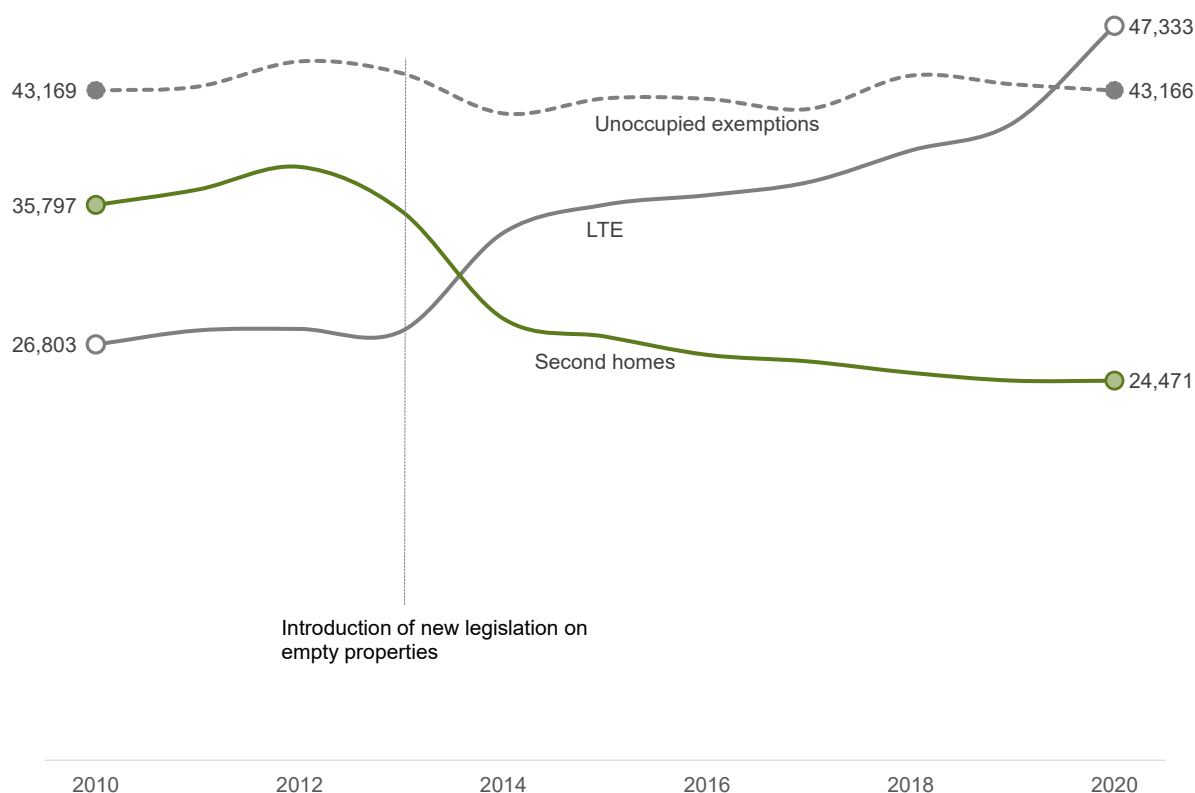
The legislation also made changes to the definition of some vacant properties and second homes, which has resulted in some re-categorisation³. These changes are reflected in decreasing numbers of second homes from 2013 to 2020 but increasing numbers of vacant properties.

¹ [Scottish Government Housing Statistics](#)

² Information on the legislation is available at: www.legislation.gov.uk and <https://www.gov.scot/policies/more-homes/empty-homes/>

³ The requirement for a vacant property classed as 'long-term empty' to be unfurnished was removed. A requirement for second homes to be lived in for at least 25 days per year was also introduced.

Figure 2: Numbers of unoccupied exemptions, long-term empty dwellings (LTE) and second homes, September 2010 to 2020

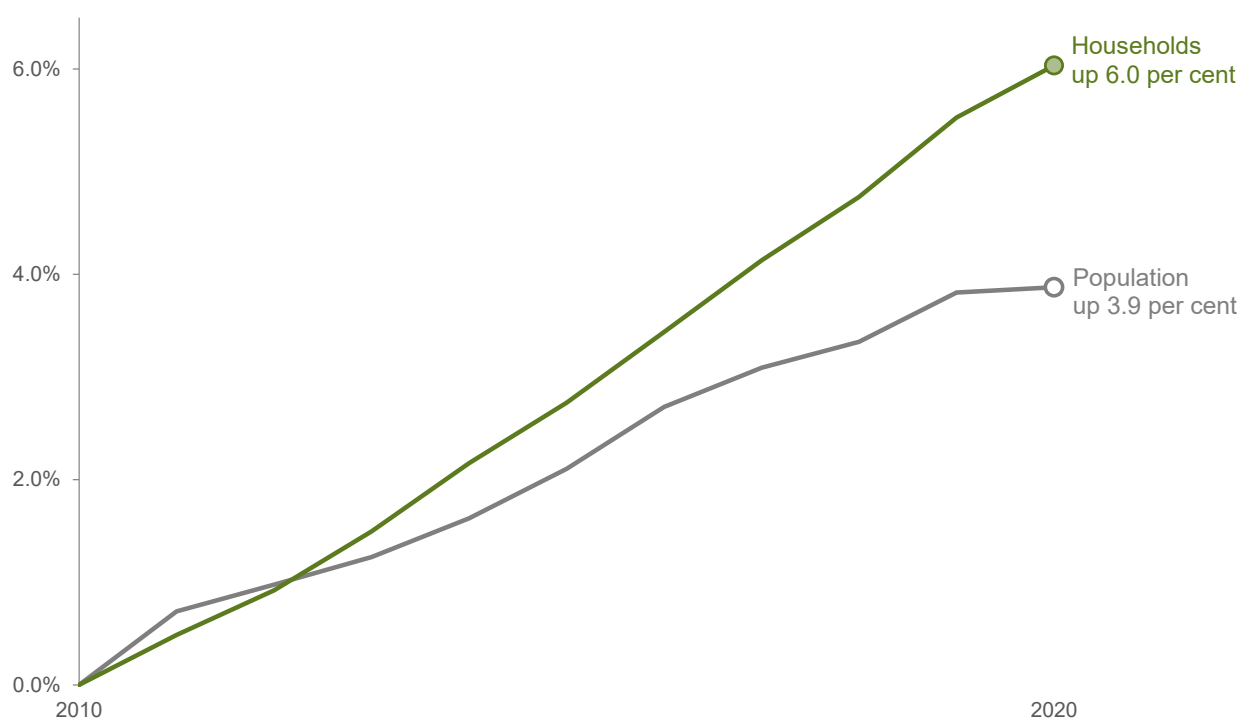


2.3 Changes in household size and type

As people increasingly live in smaller households or alone, the number of households increase at a faster rate than it would due to an increase in the population alone. Over the last ten years, the number of households increased by 6.0%, while the population increased by 3.9% ([NRS Mid-year population estimates](#), [Figure 3](#)).

Figure 3: Percentage increase in households and population, June 2010 to 2020

Percentage increase since 2010



Source for population: National Records of Scotland Mid-Year Population Estimates

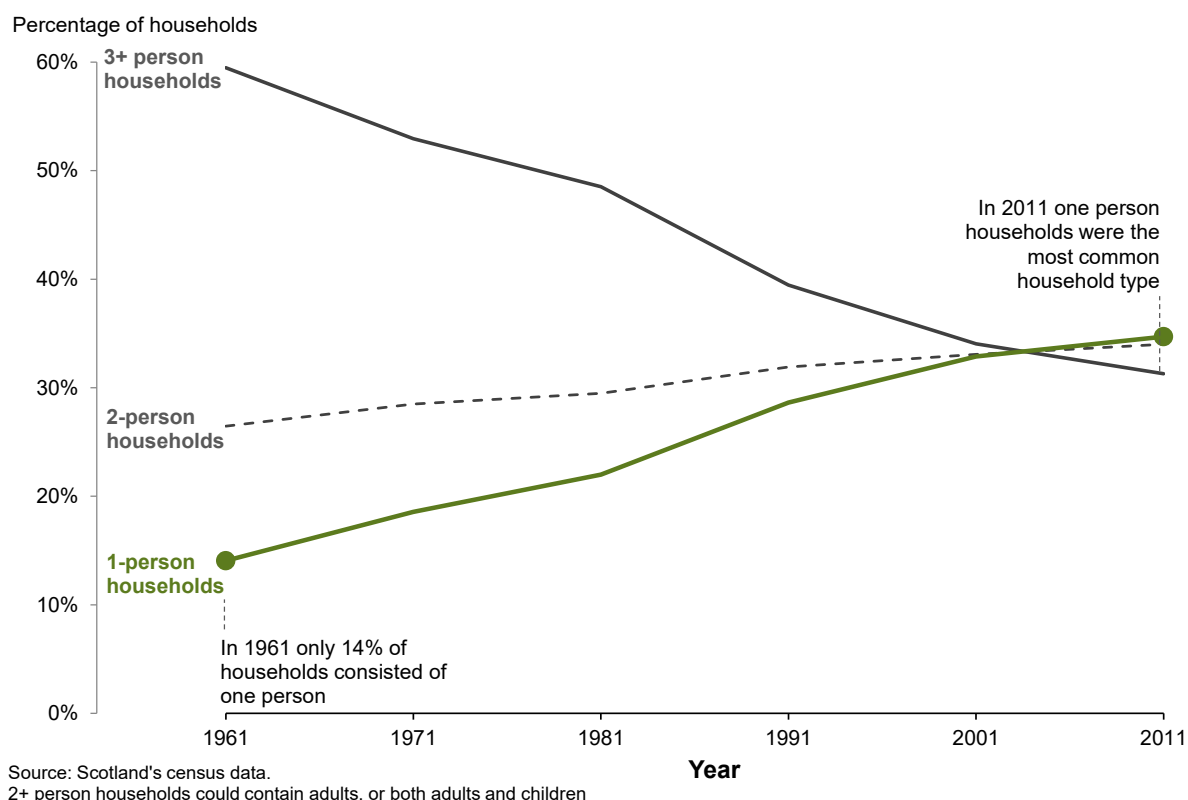
This trend is reflected in the decreasing average number of people per household ([‘household size’](#)). It also shows through in changes to the proportions of different [household types](#), for example one adult households versus other types of households ([Figure 4](#)).

Average household size has been decreasing over a long period, though at a slower rate in more recent years. It decreased from 2.18 people per household in 2010 to 2.14 in 2020.

According to the census, in 1961 only 14% of households consisted of one person, while 59% of households consisted of three or more people ([Figure 4](#)). By the time of Scotland’s Census in 2011, one person households had become the most prevalent type (35% of households). Households of three or more people were the least prevalent (31% of households).

The most recent available data on household type is from the 2019 Scottish Household Survey. According to that information, more than a third of households (36%) consisted of one adult living alone. An estimated 900,000 people were living alone in 2019.

Figure 4: Change in household type in Scotland, 1961 to 2011

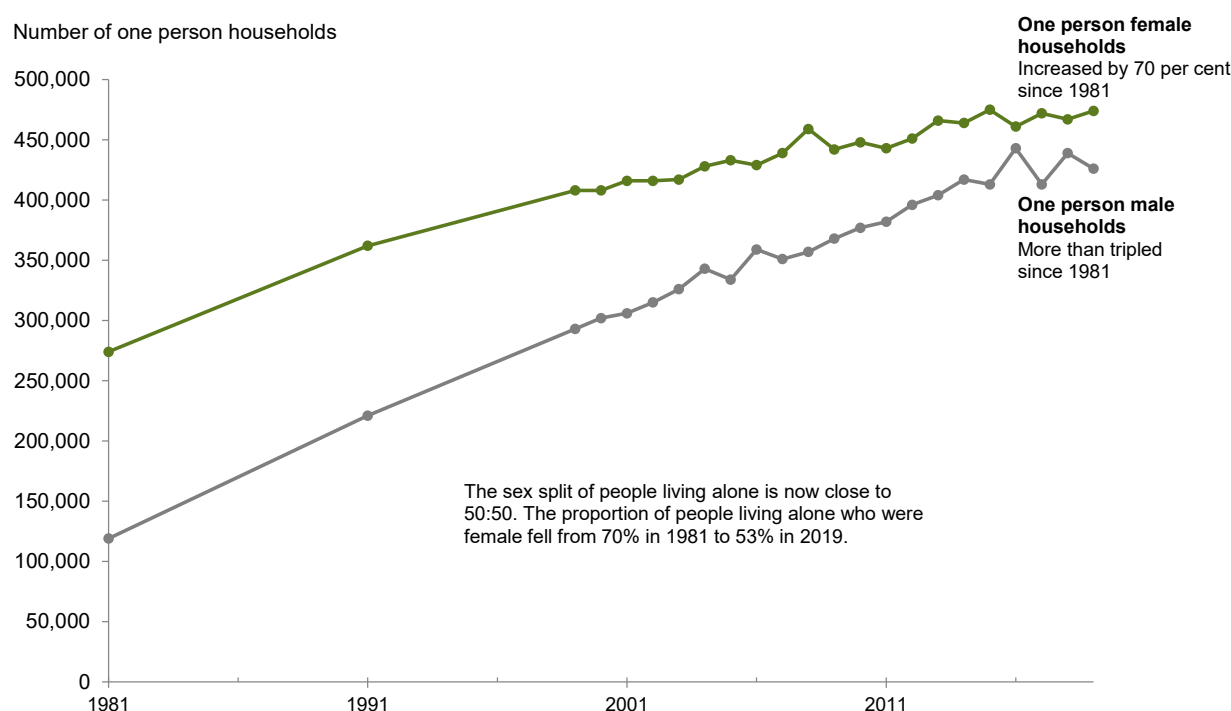


The changes in household size and type over the past decades are partly due to changes in the way we live. They also reflect the general ageing of Scotland's population. Older people are more likely to live alone or in smaller households. In addition, a growing proportion of older people are living in their own homes rather than in care homes⁴.

Information from the Census and the Scottish Household Survey shows that the number of men living alone has more than trebled since 1981. The number of women living alone is more than 1.7 times higher (Figure 5). By 2019, there were still more women living alone (474,000) than men living alone (426,000). However, the gap has generally narrowed over time.

⁴ Analysis of [Care Home Census](#) data, available from the Information Services Division (ISD) Scotland website.

Figure 5: Number of men and women living alone, 1981 to 2019



Source: Scottish Household Survey

Census data shows that in 2011 young adults in Scotland were less likely to be living alone or with a partner compared to 2001⁵. There was a corresponding increase in the proportion living with their parents⁶. ([Figure 6](#))

Other sources also point to an increase in young adults (aged 20 to 34) living with their parents over the last decade instead of forming their own households⁷. For example, [Figure 7](#) shows (based on data from the Scottish Household Survey) a generally upward trend for most of this century in the proportion of households where young adults are living with their parent(s). In the most recent years there are signs this upward trend may have plateaued.

These trends will have contributed to a slowdown in the rate of decline in average household size seen over more recent years. We do not yet know if this is a temporary effect resulting from factors such as the economic downturn in 2007/8 and the availability of affordable housing. Nor do we yet know what the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be on future trends in household composition.

⁵ Refer to section 4 of '[Household Projections for Scotland, 2012-based](#)' on the NRS website.

⁶ Office for National Statistics (ONS) [Why are more young people living with their parents?](#)

⁷ ONS '[Young adults living with parents](#)' dataset, available from the ONS website, and references therein.

Figure 6: Living arrangements of young adults (aged 20 to 34), 2001 and 2011

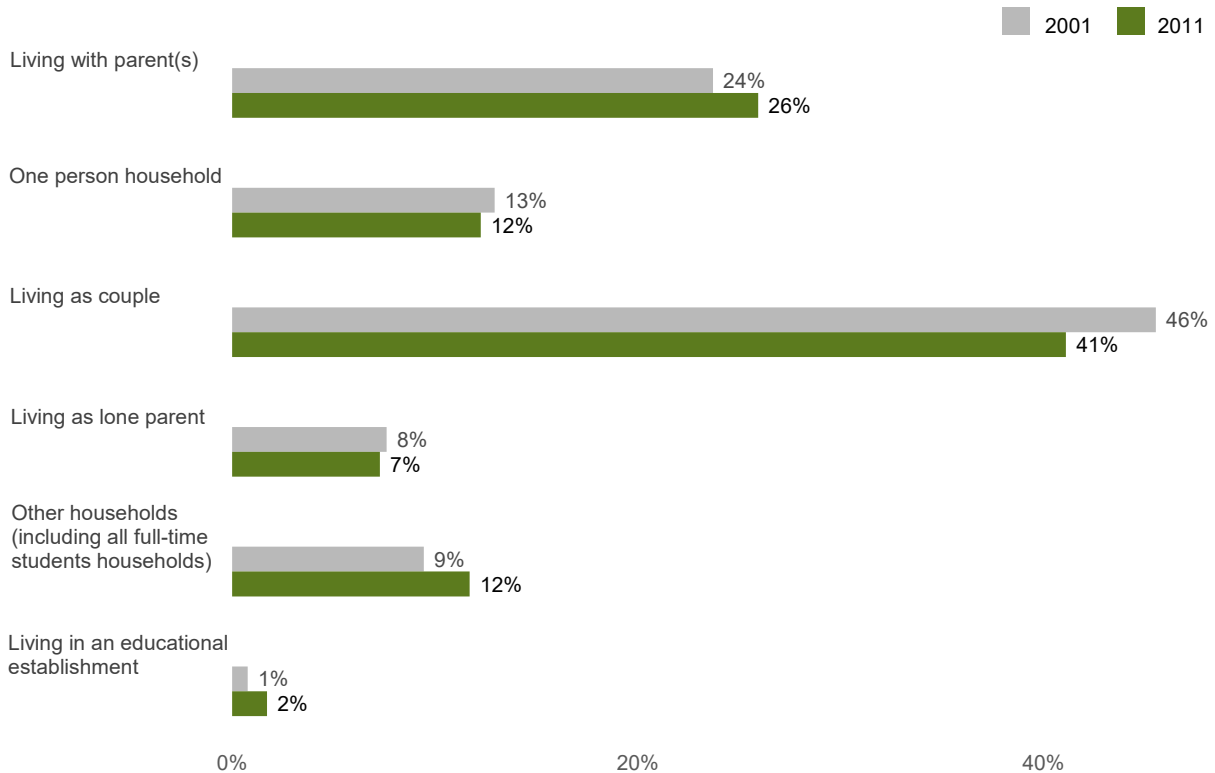
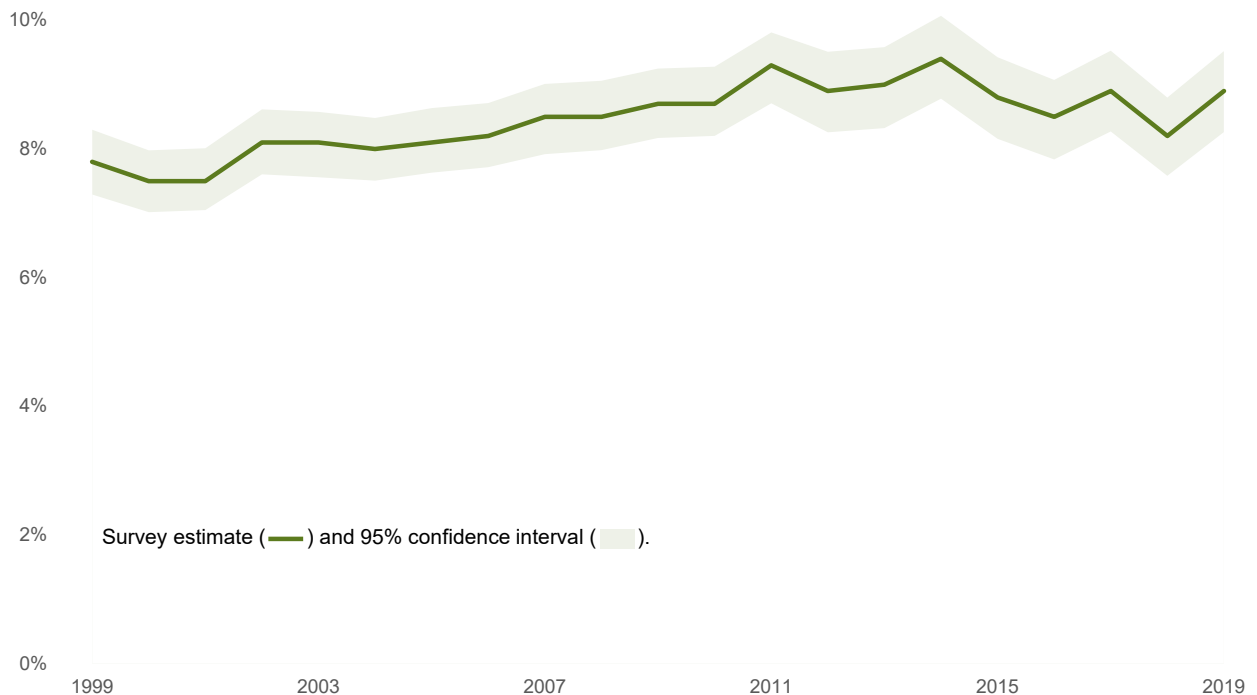


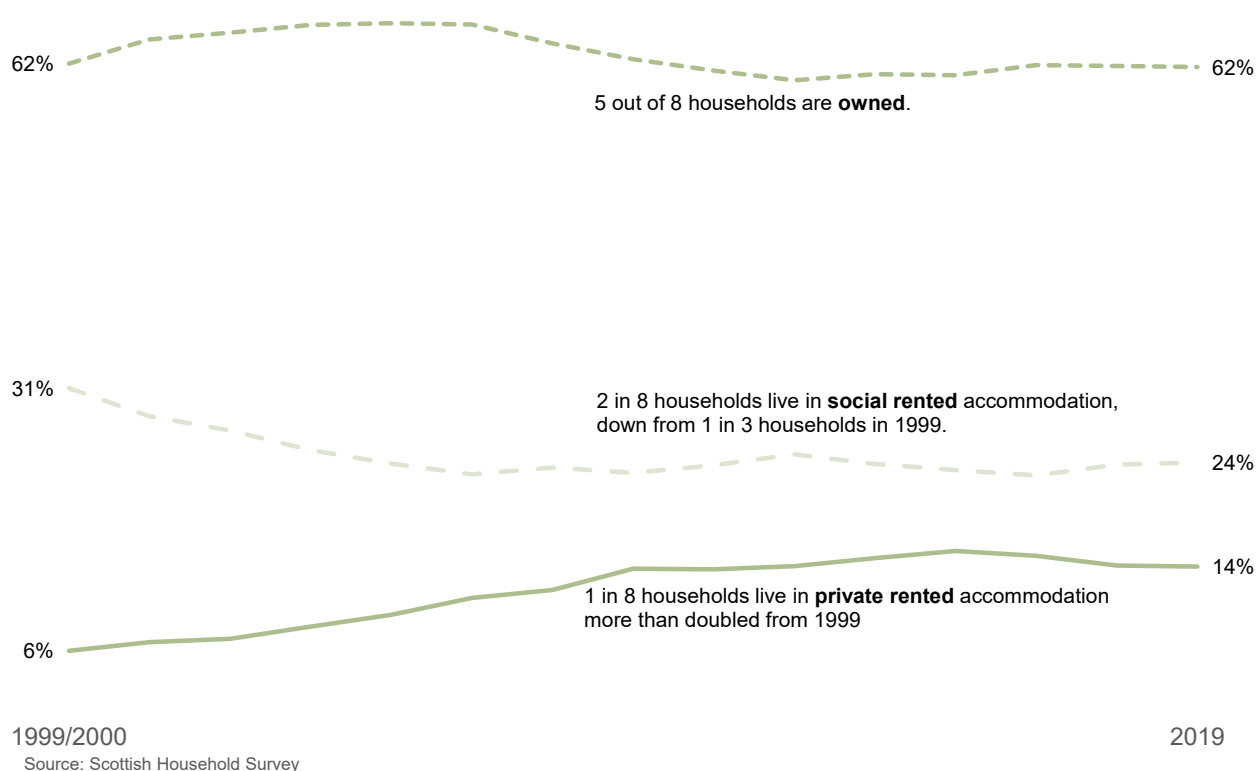
Figure 7: Proportion of households where one or more 20 to 34 year olds living with their parents, 1999-2019

Proportion of households where one or more 20 to 34 year olds are living with their parents



Source: Scottish Household Survey
The households identified are only the ones where a 20 to 34 year old is living with their parent(s) and their parent is the highest income householder

Figure 8: Number of households by tenure, 1999 to 2019



According to Scottish Household Survey, the proportion of households that are owner occupied increased from 62% in 1999 to 64% in 2009. It then fell back to 62% again in 2019 ([Figure 8](#)).

There was a marked growth in the size of the private rented sector over the same period. The proportion of households living in private rented accommodation more than doubled, from 6% in 1999 to 14% in 2019.

The percentage of households in social rented accommodation declined, from 31% in 1999 to 24% in 2019.

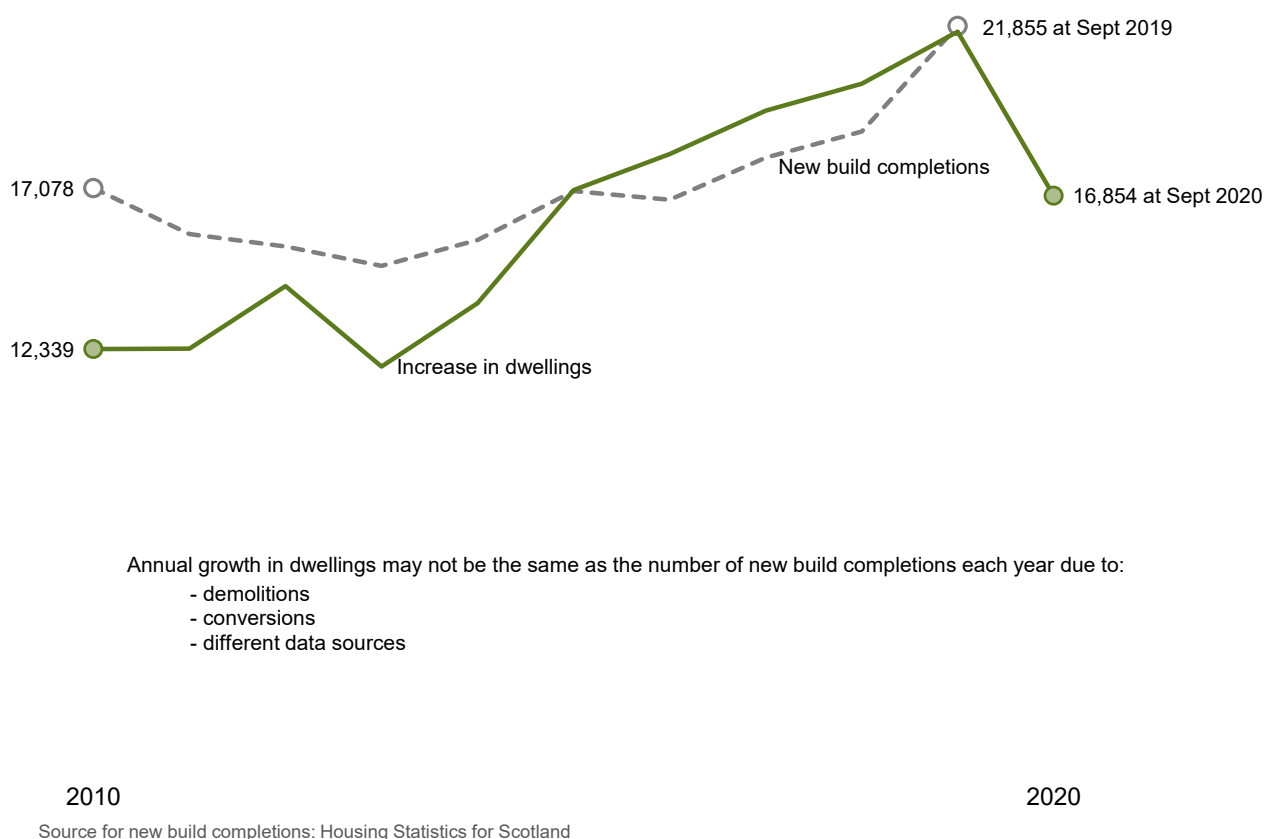
2.4 House-building

Following the recession in 2007/8 the number of new build completions reduced each year for several years. From 2014 that downward trend reversed ([Figure 9](#)). The total of 21,900 completions for the year to September 2019 was the highest recorded since 2010, and was 17% higher than in the previous year. However, it was still considerably lower than the 25,300 completions in the year to September 2007⁸. There were 11,100 new build completions in October 2019 to March 2020. Data for the six months to September 2020 is incomplete due to COVID-19 related delays in data provision by some local authorities.

[Figure 9](#) also shows the annual increase in the number of dwellings in Scotland from 2010 to 2020. The trend is similar to that seen for the number of new build completions, although there are differences between the two measures. For instance changes in dwelling numbers also reflect demolitions and conversions. Moreover, the data come from two different sources.

⁸ Scottish Government (SG) [Housing Statistics for Scotland – New House Building](#)

Figure 9: New build completions (October, 2010 to 2019 and annual increase in number of dwellings (September, 2010 to 2020)



2.5 Comparison to other parts of the UK

The increase in the number of households and dwellings in Scotland in the last ten years also occurred in England^{9,10}, Wales^{11,12} and Northern Ireland^{13,14}. The 6.0% increase recorded for Scotland between 2010 and 2020 was similar to the 5.9% estimated for the UK as a whole¹⁵.

Households in Scotland are smaller than in any other UK country, according to the 2011 Census. Scotland had a higher proportion of one person households and a lower proportion of households with three or more people¹⁶. One reason contributing to this might be the lower fertility rate in Scotland.

The proportions of people aged 65 or over in 2019 in Scotland and the UK as a whole are similar: 19.1% and 18.5% respectively¹⁷. So this would not appear to be a factor contributing to the higher proportion of one person households in Scotland.

⁹ Office for National Statistics (ONS) [Household projections for England: 2018-based](#)

¹⁰ DCLG publication [Dwelling Stock Estimates in England: 2020](#)

¹¹ Welsh Government publication [Household estimates for Wales: mid-2019](#)

¹² Welsh Government publication [Dwelling stock estimates for Wales, 31 March 2020](#)

¹³ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) publication [Household Projections \(2016-based\)](#)

¹⁴ Northern Ireland Department for Communities publication [Northern Ireland Housing Statistics 2019-20](#)

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistical bulletin [Families and Households in the UK: 2020](#)

¹⁶ Analysis of data from the 2001 and 2011 Censuses in [‘Households and Household Composition in England and Wales: 2001-11’](#)

¹⁷ [Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2019](#)

3 Council area level

The distributions of households and dwellings, household size, housing density and dwelling characteristics (for example Council Tax band) are not even across Scotland. This section considers the variation in these measures at council area level.

3.1 Total numbers of households and dwellings

Over the last ten years the number of households has grown in every council area ([Figure 10a](#), [Figure 10b](#)). Broadly speaking, the east and north of the country have seen bigger increases compared with the west and south.

Changes in household numbers and population are generally correlated. Council areas with the biggest percentage increases in households tend also to be those with the biggest percentage population increases. Conversely, council areas with smaller percentage increases in households tend to have had smaller percentage increases (or decreases) in their population. City of Edinburgh and Glasgow City stand out from this general pattern. Both had well above average percentage increases in their population between 2010 and 2010 but their percentage change in household numbers were similar to or below average. This is reflected in the upward trend for average household size in these two council areas ([Figure 11](#)).

The council areas with the greatest percentage increases in household numbers were:

- Midlothian (15%, 5,400 households)
- East Lothian (11%, 4,900 households)
- Orkney Islands (10%, 1,000 households).

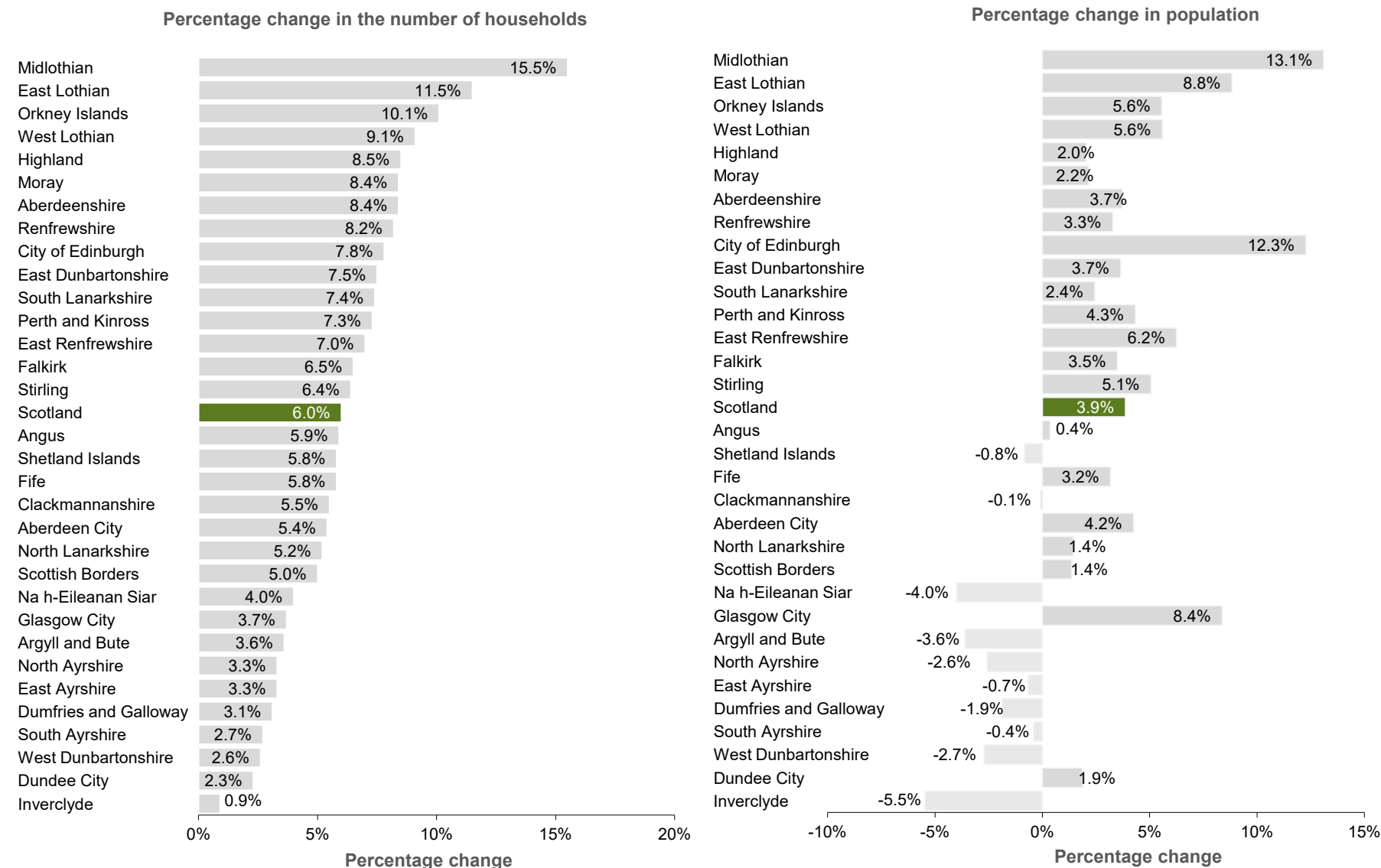
City of Edinburgh had the largest increase in absolute number of households (17,300), an increase of 8%.

Between 2019 and 2020, the number of households has increased in every council area except South Ayrshire (which had a very small decrease - less than 50 households).

Over the last 10 years, the number of dwellings increased in all council areas, except for Inverclyde which had a decrease of 300 dwellings (0.7%). This latter reduction is believed to be mainly due to demolition of unoccupied properties.

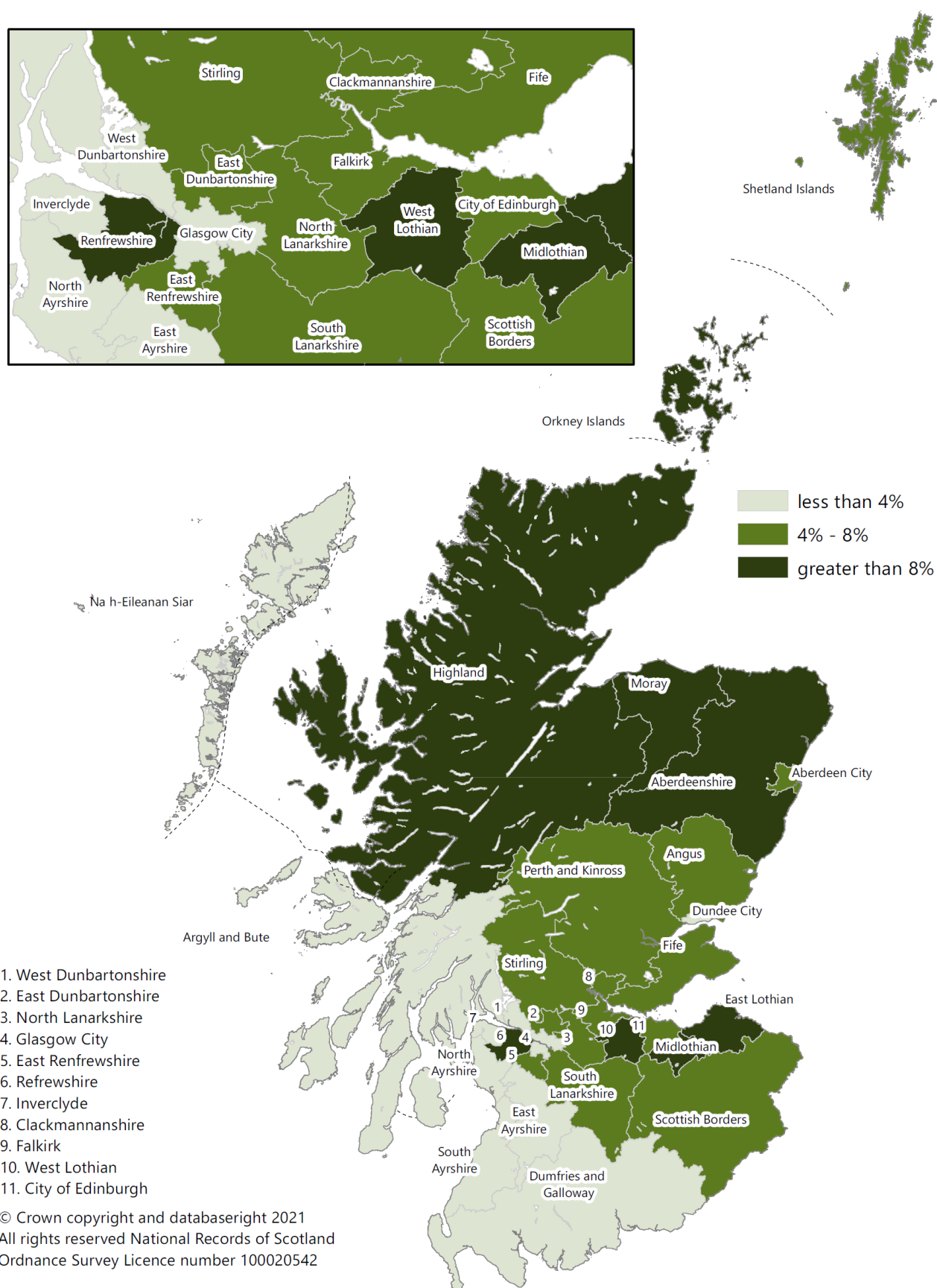
The total number of dwellings also increased in all council areas between 2019 and 2020, apart from West Dunbartonshire.

Figure 10a: Percentage change in the number of households and population by council area, June 2010 to 2020



Source for population: National Records of Scotland Mid-Year Population Estimates

Figure 10b: Percentage increase in the number of households by council area, June 2010 to 2020

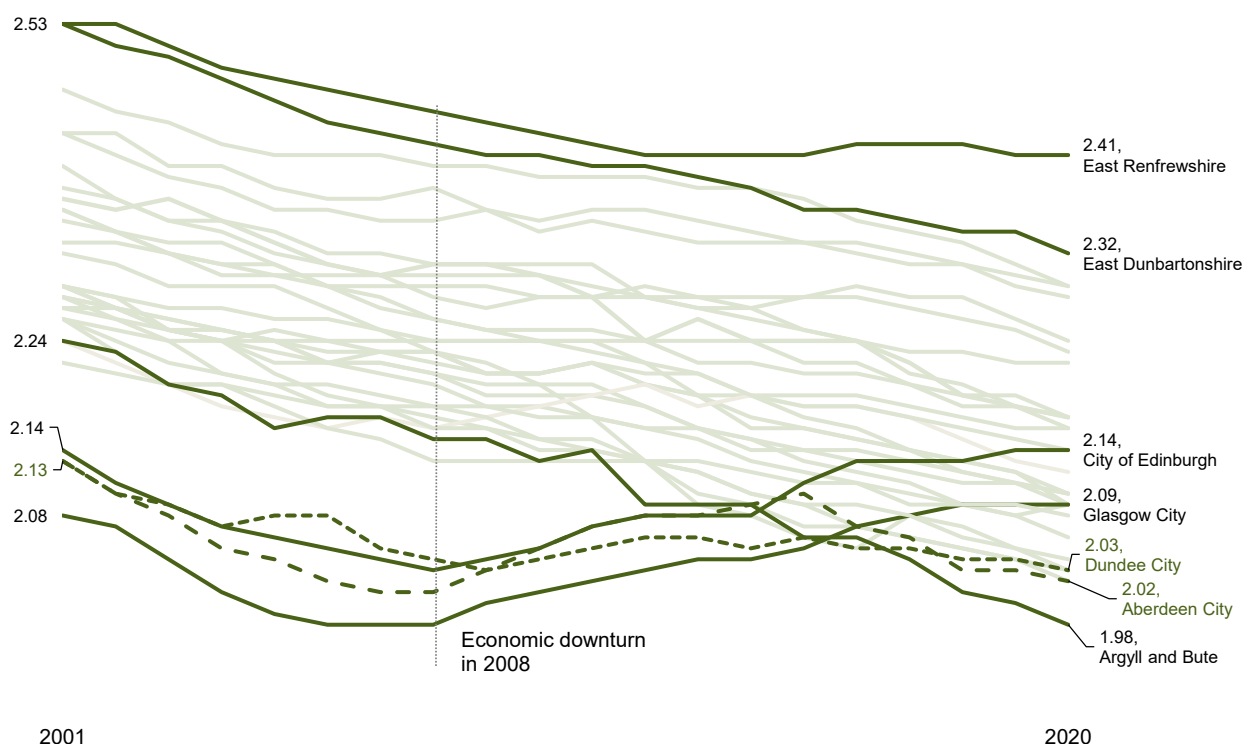


3.2 Average household size

In 2020, [average household size](#) varied from 1.98 people per household in Argyll and Bute to 2.41 people per household in East Renfrewshire. Average household size has decreased in most council areas since 2001 ([Figure 11](#)). The biggest relative decrease occurred in Na h-Eileanan Siar, from 2.32 to 2.04 people per household.

In City of Edinburgh and Glasgow City average household size was initially falling but then started to increase from 2008. This pattern was also observed in Aberdeen City until 2015 since when average household size fell markedly, from 2.10 in 2015 to 2.02 in 2020. In Dundee City, average household size was decreasing before 2009, but has remained relatively stable since then.

Figure 11: Average household size by council area, June 2001 to 2020



Source: National Records of Scotland Mid-year household and population estimates; Scotland's Census 2001 and 2011

3.3 Vacant dwellings and second homes

The council areas with the highest proportion of dwellings that were [vacant](#) in 2020 were:

- Na h-Eileanan Siar (8.1%, 1,200 dwellings)
- Shetland Islands (7.0%, 800 dwellings)
- Orkney Islands (5.6%, 600 dwellings)
- Aberdeen City (5.6%, 6,700 dwellings)

The council areas with the highest proportion of [unoccupied exemptions](#) dwellings in 2020 were:

- Orkney Islands (3.9%, 400 dwellings)
- Na h-Eileanan Siar (3.8%, 600 dwellings)
- Inverclyde (3.2%, 1,200 dwellings)

Over the last ten years, the proportion of such dwellings decreased in 12 council areas and stayed the same or increased in 20 council areas.

In 2020, the council areas with the highest proportion of dwellings which are [long-term empty](#) were:

- Shetland Islands (5.2%, 600 dwellings)
- Na h-Eileanan Siar (4.3%, 600 dwellings)
- Aberdeen City (3.8%, 3,800 dwellings)

Over the last ten years the proportion of dwellings which are long-term empty has decreased in three council areas and stayed the same or increased in 26 council areas¹⁸.

The total number of long-term empty dwellings increased by 6,300 (15%) between 2019 and 2020, with rises in all but four council areas. The city council areas accounted for over half this increase; City of Edinburgh (1,500) and Glasgow City (800) accounted for over a third of the increase. To some extent these increases may reflect fewer people moving house and less new building during lockdown in spring 2020.

The council areas with the highest proportion of dwellings that are second homes in 2020 were:

- Argyll and Bute (6.5%, 3,100 second homes)
- Na h-Eileanan Siar (5.3%, 800 second homes)
- Orkney Islands (4.3%, 500 second homes)
- Highland (3.2%, 3,800 second homes)

Over the last ten years, the proportion of dwellings which are second homes has increased in five council areas and decreased in 24 council areas¹⁸.

¹⁸ Three council areas are not included because there are not separate data for dwellings that are long-term empty and second homes in 2010.

How do these figures compare with past trends?

The numbers of vacant and second homes in a council area can fluctuate a lot from year to year. This can be due to changes in the definitions involved, the charges payable on these types of property and reviews carried out by councils.

In particular, the numbers of vacant and second homes were affected by the introduction of Council Tax changes for such properties from 2013 onwards. Scottish Government legislation introduced in 2013 allows councils to increase the Council Tax charges on certain types of empty property. It also made some changes to the definitions of such properties and of second homes. This led to many councils reviewing such properties, resulting in some re-classifications. Many councils have now introduced new charges for empty properties.

This process is expected to continue in the years ahead, and has already affected the ability of some councils to provide summary data on second homes.

Taking all this together, it is difficult to determine whether the change in numbers of vacant and second homes over recent years in particular is a result of real changes to the numbers of such properties, re-classification effects, or a mixture of the two.

3.4 Housing density

In 2020 there were 0.34 [dwellings per hectare](#) in Scotland as a whole. However, this varies widely between council areas. Highland and Na h-Eileanan Siar had the lowest density of housing, with an average of 0.05 dwellings per hectare each. Glasgow City had the highest average density of housing of all council areas (18.22 dwellings per hectare) followed by Dundee City (12.57 dwellings per hectare).

3.5 Characteristics of dwellings

[Council Tax bands](#) give some indication of the value of a property. The cheapest properties fall into band A and the most expensive into band H.

In 2020, three in five (59%) dwellings in Scotland fell into the lowest Council Tax bands (A-C). This proportion was highest in Na h-Eileanan Siar (77%) and lowest in East Renfrewshire (27%). Slightly more than one in ten (13%) dwellings fell into the highest bands (F-H). This proportion was highest in East Renfrewshire (35%) and lowest in Na h-Eileanan Siar (2%).

The [types of dwellings](#) found in each council area also vary. For example, in 2017 (the latest year for which data are currently available) the council area with the highest proportion of detached dwellings was Na h-Eileanan Siar (64%), while Glasgow City had the lowest proportion (4%).

4 Neighbourhood (data zone) level

The distributions of households and dwellings, household size, housing density and dwelling characteristics vary within each council area. The [data zone](#) level estimates of occupied and vacant dwellings, and of dwelling characteristics, are published in full online at the [NRS website](#) and [statistics.gov.scot](#).

4.1 Vacant dwellings and second homes

The variation in the percentage of dwellings which are vacant or second homes in data zones within individual council areas is illustrated in the maps in [Figure 12](#) and [Figure 13](#). Rural council areas, such as Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands, have the highest overall proportions of dwellings that are vacant or second homes ([Table 4](#)). However, there are neighbourhoods in more urban council areas where these proportions are also relatively high.

While each data zone in Scotland is designed to have a roughly similar population size, those in more urban council areas tend to be much smaller in area. This is because of the greater density of population and dwellings in such areas. As a result it can be difficult to observe patterns in national scale maps such as [Figures 12](#) and [13](#). However, the data zone level information produced as part of this publication can be used to illustrate geographic patterns within council areas.

This is illustrated in [Figure 14](#). This highlights that within an area such as City of Edinburgh the percentage of vacant dwellings can be very different even between neighbouring data zones. High proportions of vacant dwellings can occur in areas for a number of reasons. For example this can be due to dwellings are lying empty awaiting demolition, new housing awaiting occupation or rented accommodation without tenants.

Similarly, the proportion of dwellings that are second homes can vary considerably within each council at data zone level. A good illustration of this is North Ayrshire. This council area has a relatively high proportion of its dwellings which were second homes – 2.2% compared with 0.9% for Scotland as a whole. However, as the map in [Figure 13](#) shows, this is mainly because North Ayrshire includes the island of Arran, which has high proportions of second homes. The proportions in the mainland part of North Ayrshire are much lower.

Figure 12: Percentage of dwellings which are vacant in each data zone, September 2020

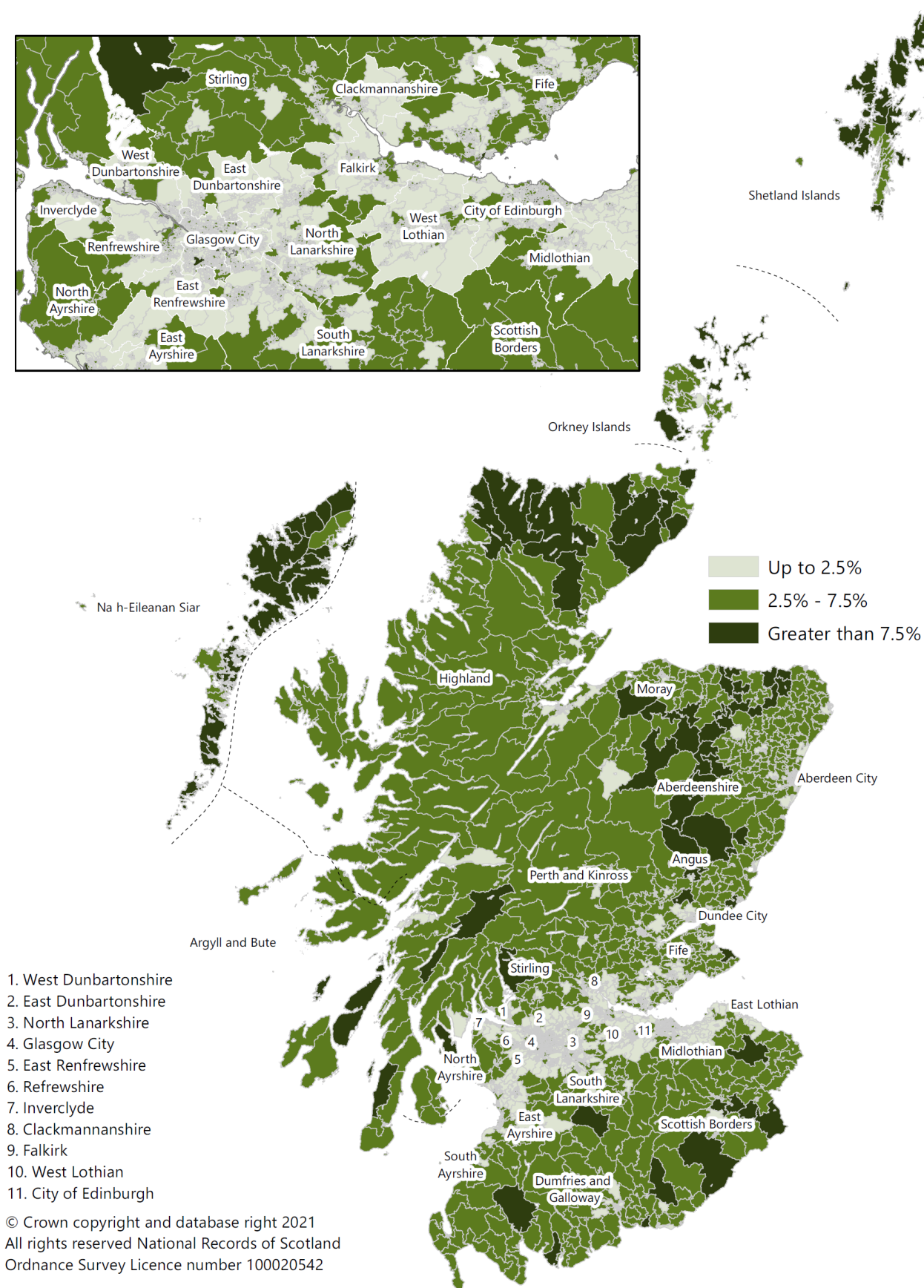
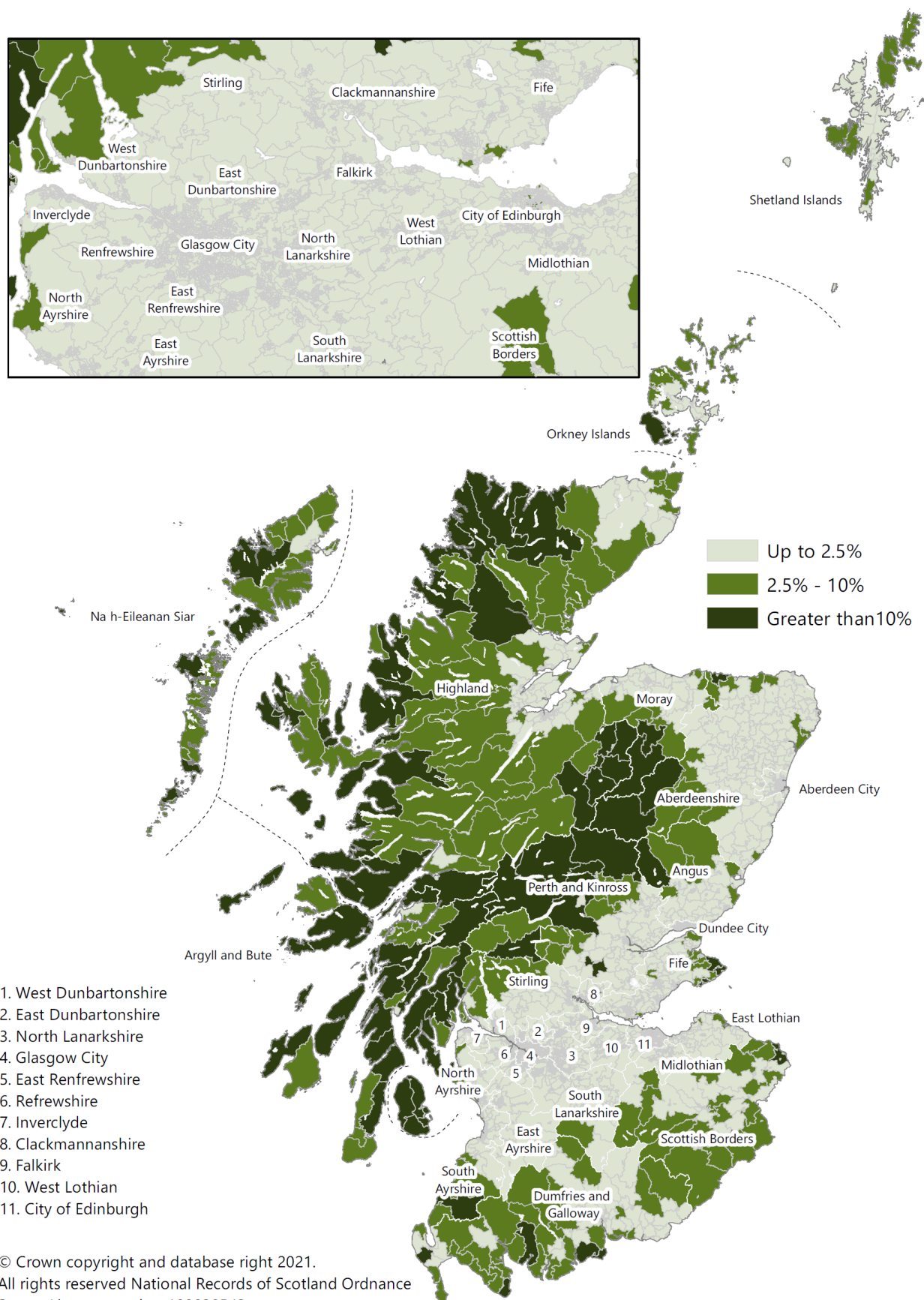
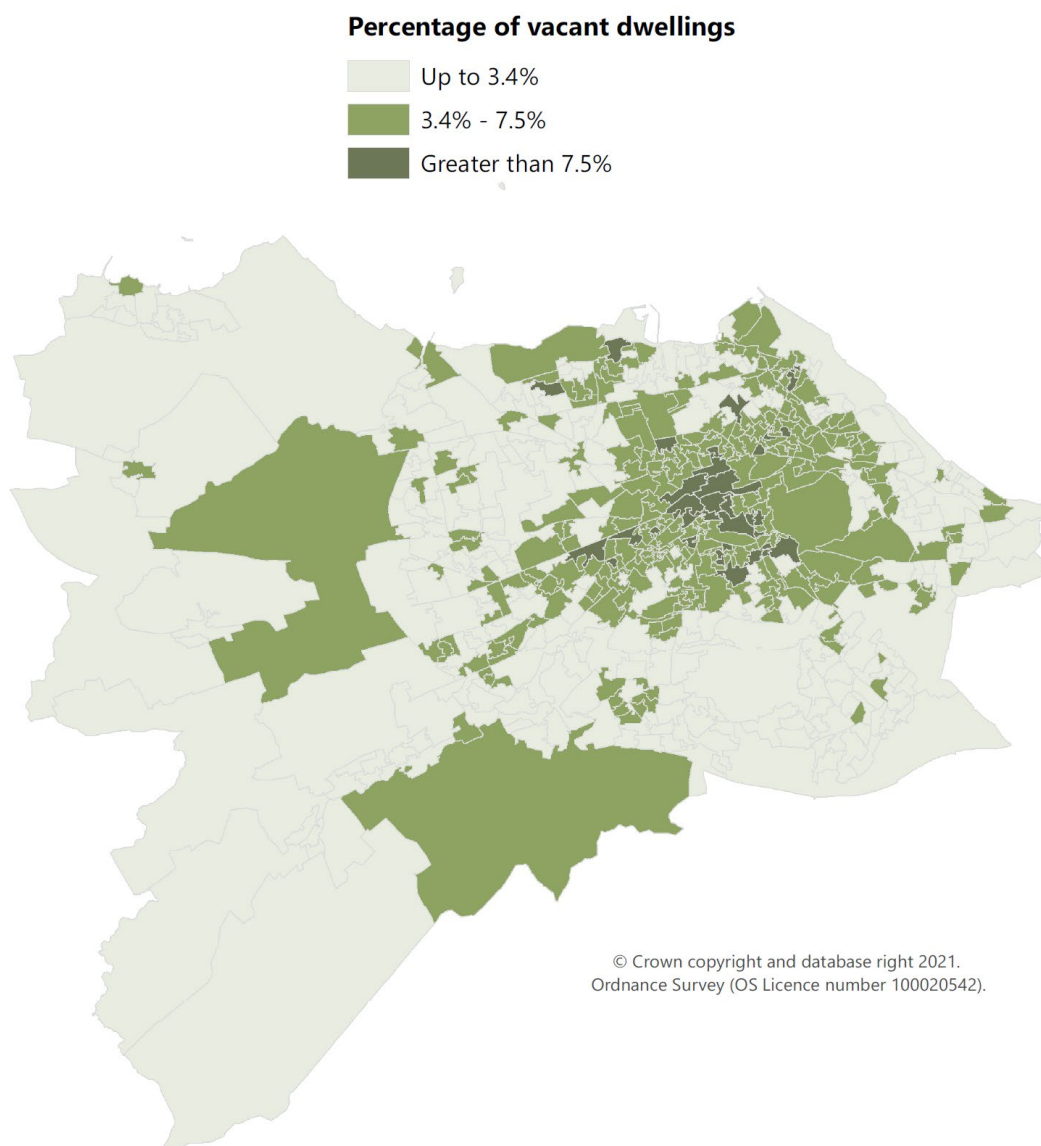


Figure 13: Percentage of dwellings which are second homes in each data zone, September 2020



© Crown copyright and database right 2021.
All rights reserved National Records of Scotland Ordnance
Survey Licence number 100020542

Figure 14: Percentage of dwellings which are vacant in each data zone in City of Edinburgh, September 2020



4.2 'Single adult' discounts

'[Single adult discounts](#)' from Council Tax are granted to dwellings where one adult lives either alone, with children or with another adult who is 'disregarded' for Council Tax purposes (for example a student). Just under 38% of dwellings in Scotland received a single adult Council Tax discount in 2020. This proportion varied from 31% in East Renfrewshire to 44% in Glasgow City.

4.3 Occupied dwellings that are exempt from Council Tax

Some [occupied dwellings are exempt](#) from paying Council Tax. Most of these are all-student households, though other types of occupied dwellings are also included in this category, such as armed forces accommodation. Summary information from Council Tax systems is therefore a good source of data on the numbers of such dwellings. In 2020, 3.3% of dwellings in Scotland were occupied but exempt from paying Council Tax.

The proportion of occupied dwellings that are exempt from Council Tax tends to be highest in the council areas which have major universities, and therefore large student populations. They also tend to be quite concentrated within certain parts of these council areas.

5 Other geographies

5.1 Urban rural classification

The Scottish Government produces an [Urban Rural classification](#). This is based on settlement size defined by NRS and accessibility based on drive-time analysis.

The latest data on dwellings by dwelling type and number of rooms relates to 2017

In 2020:

- In large urban areas, a high proportion of dwellings were flats, had 1-3 rooms, and were in council tax bands A-C.
- In remote rural areas, a high proportion of dwellings were detached, had 4-6 rooms, and were in council tax bands A-C.
- Remote rural areas had the highest proportions of both second homes (6.3% in these areas) and vacant dwellings (5.6%). Other urban areas (settlements of 10,000 to 125,000 people) had the lowest proportion of second homes (0.3%). They also had, together with Large urban areas and Accessible small towns, the lowest proportion of vacant dwellings (close to 3%).
- Large urban areas had the highest proportion of dwellings with single adult discounts (40.7%). Accessible rural areas had the lowest proportion (29.7%). Large urban areas also had the highest proportion of occupied dwellings exempt from Council Tax (6.4%). Remote rural areas had the lowest proportion (0.8%). Occupied dwellings exempt from Council Tax include all-student households, so it is unsurprising that large urban areas such as cities with large student populations had a high proportion of such dwellings.

The density of dwellings in **large urban areas** is around 380 times greater than in **remote rural areas**.

5.2 Strategic Development Plan and National Park areas

There are four [Strategic Development Plan \(SDP\) areas](#) in Scotland, based on the four largest city regions:

- Aberdeen (Aberdeen City and Shire)
- Dundee (Dundee, Perth, Angus and North Fife - TAYplan)
- Edinburgh (Edinburgh and South East Scotland - SESplan)
- Glasgow (Glasgow and the Clyde Valley - Clydeplan)

In 2020:

- 75% of Scotland's dwellings were in the four SDP areas.
- The density of dwellings in SDP areas was much higher than in rural regions (up to 2.69 dwellings per hectare in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley).
- The characteristics and occupancy rates of dwellings in each SDP area broadly reflected those for Scotland as a whole.

[National Parks](#) are protected areas of countryside, wildlife and cultural heritage. There are two National Parks in Scotland: Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

In 2020:

- The density of dwellings in the National Park areas was very low (0.02 dwellings per hectare in Cairngorms and 0.04 dwellings per hectare in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs). These values are typical of 'remote rural regions' for Scotland which had an average of 0.03 dwellings per hectare.
- The proportion of second homes was high (11.0% in Cairngorms and 5.4% in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs). The percentage of second homes in Cairngorms was much higher than in remote rural areas in general (6.3%).
- The percentage of dwellings in National Park areas in council tax bands F-H was higher (21% in Cairngorms and 28% in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs) compared to remote rural areas in general (14%).

5.3 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (SIMD) is produced by Scottish Government. It identifies concentrations of deprivation across Scotland in a consistent way. The statistics included in this publication relate to the [SIMD 2020](#) classification.

The statistics for 2020 show that:

- Areas which are more deprived tend to have a higher proportion of dwellings in the lower council tax bands; a higher proportion of flats; a lower proportion of detached homes; and more homes with fewer rooms.
- The density of dwellings in the most deprived neighbourhoods (19 dwellings per hectare) is nearly three times that in the least deprived areas (7 dwellings per hectare).
- The proportion of dwellings which are vacant, or are occupied but exempt from Council Tax, is roughly similar to the national average across all SIMD deciles. However, the proportion of dwellings with a single adult discount from Council Tax is much higher in the most deprived neighbourhoods (52%) than in the least deprived neighbourhoods (28%). Second homes are less likely to be located in more deprived areas.

6 Background information

6.1 Key uses of household estimates

The household estimates contribute to National Records of Scotland (NRS) [household projections](#) which are available on the NRS website. Household estimates and projections (for Scotland and the UK) are used directly and indirectly in the production of certain statistics contained within the Scottish Government's annual '[Government Expenditure and Revenues Scotland \(GERS\)](#)' publication and the '[Quarterly National Accounts Scotland \(QNAS\)](#)' releases, both of which can be found on the Scottish Government (SG) website. Some of the SG's major population surveys use the household estimates and projections in their weighting strategies; further information on these surveys is available from the [statistics](#) section of the SG website.

Household estimates are also used as the denominator for other statistics, such as the percentage of households receiving benefits, and in various forms of research. They contribute to Scottish Health and Wellbeing profiles published by the [Scottish Public Health Observatory](#). These are used by policy makers and others to increase understanding of local health issues.

The figures on occupied dwellings are used to measure progress towards Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Outcomes, via the [Housing and Regeneration Programmes \(HARP\)](#) website.

Household estimates are also used for:

- Informing councils about housing need and provision of services (including housing, waste collection and community care)
- Inputs to the Development Plans prepared by councils and other planning authorities
- Land use allocation and planning
- Inputs to transport models
- Assessing demand for water and sewerage services
- Risk analysis by Fire and Rescue Services
- Providing information on housing in rural areas (including second homes and empty properties)
- As a baseline for local projections of household numbers
- Informing projections of future school rolls
- Producing profiles of small areas to increase local knowledge

6.2 Definitions

A **‘dwelling’** refers to the accommodation itself, e.g. a house or a flat. Dwelling estimates come from both Council Tax records and Scottish Assessors’ data.

A **‘household’** refers to the people living together in a dwelling. The number of dwellings will not necessarily equal the number of households in an area, because some dwellings are vacant or second homes, and some dwellings contain more than one household. Communal establishments, such as care homes and student halls of residence, are not included in the definition of a household. Household estimates come from Council Tax records.

The **‘household size’** is the number of people in a household. Household size is [estimated](#) using the household estimates and population estimates.

A household can be classed into a **‘household type’** based on the number and gender of adults, and the number of children which it includes (for example ‘1 adult: male’ households). Household type information is derived from the [Scottish Household Survey](#) (SHS).

Data zones are a key geography for presenting small area statistics in Scotland. They are small enough to represent local communities, or can be aggregated to other geographies such as electoral wards, parliamentary constituencies, urban/rural regions and deprived areas. There are currently 6,976 data zones across Scotland, with an average of around 350 households each.

6.3 Data sources

6.3.1 Household estimates from Council Tax systems

Sources of data

A household is a group of people living together in a dwelling. Dwellings can contain more than one household, or groups of people living communally (e.g. halls of residence).

Scottish Assessors record all dwellings in Scotland

Councils record the council tax charges, discounts and exemptions applicable to each dwelling. These records can identify whether a dwelling is occupied, vacant, or a second home. NRS receives a snapshot of these records in September.

The number of occupied dwellings is found by subtracting the number of vacant or second homes from the total number recorded by the council. This is used as the initial estimate for the number of households.

The estimated number of households is adjusted back to June, based on the September estimates from the current and previous year

A final adjustment is made to account for (i) the estimated number of occupied dwellings which contain more than one household, and (ii) the estimated number of communal establishments which have been included in council tax records. These estimates are based on census data from 2011.



September 2019



June 2020



September 2020



To administer Council Tax, each council keeps a record of all dwellings, as well as information on those receiving Council Tax discounts or exemptions, such as vacant dwellings and second homes. This makes it possible to estimate the number of dwellings that are occupied, by subtracting the number of vacant dwellings and second homes from the total number of dwellings. An occupied dwelling is approximately equivalent to a household.

Council Tax billing systems also hold records of other types of discounts and exemptions which provide information on household type. Dwellings which contain just one adult living alone or one adult living with children or with adults who are 'disregarded' for Council Tax purposes can receive a 25% Council Tax discount (referred to in this publication as a 'Single adult discount'). Certain types of dwellings are occupied but exempt from paying Council Tax, such as all-student households and dwellings which are owned by the Secretary of State for Defence for providing armed forces accommodation (referred to as 'occupied exemptions'). Summary statistics on these household types are included in this publication.

6.3.2 Definitions of household characteristics from Council Tax billing systems

Category	Description
All dwellings	This is the total number of dwellings on the Council Tax valuation list (excluding free-standing private lock-ups and garages). A 'dwelling' refers to the accommodation itself, for example a house or a flat and includes second homes that are not let out commercially. Caravans count as dwellings if they are someone's main home.
Vacant dwellings	This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dwellings exempt from Council Tax, which are unoccupied; and • dwellings which are recorded on Council Tax systems as being long-term empty properties.
Second homes	Dwellings can, in some council areas, be subject to a Council Tax discount of between 10 and 50% due to being second homes. This includes self-catering holiday accommodation available to let for a total of less than 140 days per year.
Occupied dwellings	All dwellings, minus those which are vacant or second homes.
Single adult discounts	Dwellings subject to a Council Tax discount of 25%. This may include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dwellings with a single adult; and • dwellings with one adult living with children, or with one or more adults who are 'disregarded' for Council Tax purposes.
Occupied exemptions	Dwellings exempt from Council Tax, which are occupied. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dwellings only occupied by students; • armed forces accommodation owned by the Secretary of State for Defence; • dwellings which are the sole residence only of people aged under 18 or people who are classed as 'severely mentally impaired'; • trial flats used by registered housing associations; and • prisons.

When interpreting the figures, it is important to note that vacant dwellings will not be included here if they are not recorded on Council Tax systems – for example, short-term vacancies which can arise when people move house. In addition, second homes which are let out for more than 140 days per year are not liable to pay Council Tax – they are instead liable to pay non-domestic rates. This means that such dwellings are not included here, in either the figures on second homes or the total number of dwellings.

6.3.3 Households and dwellings ([Tables 1 and 2](#))

Summary information on the number of dwellings in different categories is provided by each council to the Scottish Government, using the Council Tax Base form, '[Ctaxbase](#)', available from the Scottish Government website. The information on the number of dwellings contained in Table 2 is based on these figures.

The household estimates for Scotland and for each council area in Table 1 are calculated by subtracting vacant dwellings and second homes from the total dwellings figures shown in Table 2. The resulting number of occupied dwellings is then adjusted from September back to June, as the National Records of Scotland (NRS) mid-year population estimates

and household projections are both based at 30 June each year. A further adjustment is made to account for differences in the number of households estimated from Council Tax data and recorded in Scotland's Census 2001 and 2011. A number of factors can be responsible for the different number of households recorded by each source. They can include the treatment of vacant dwellings, shared dwellings, holiday lets, caravans and some communal establishments (for example student halls of residence).

To make the adjustment for differences with the censuses, the household estimates for each council area are adjusted by the percentage difference between the number of households recorded in Scotland's Census 2001 and 2011 and the number of occupied dwellings (adjusted from September to June) in the 2001 and 2011 Council Tax data. The census figures are adjusted from Census Day to June, by applying household information from the census (in the form of 'headship rates'¹⁸) to the mid-year population estimates for 2001 and 2011¹⁹. A straight-line interpolation between the percentage differences in 2001 and 2011 is used to adjust the occupied dwellings figures from 2002 to 2010. Figures for 2012 onwards are adjusted by the percentage difference for 2011. The average adjustment for 2012 onwards was a 0.6% reduction; it varied for each council area, from a reduction of around 3% to an increase of around 4%.

More information on the differences between NRS's household estimates (and projections) and household results from Scotland's Census 2011 can be found in [the Census website](#), on the NRS website.

6.3.4 Vacant dwellings and second homes ([Tables 4, 5, 6, 9, 11 and 13](#))

Clackmannanshire Council were unable to provide separate figures on second homes and vacant dwellings at council area until 2014. They were unable to provide separate figures at neighbourhood (data zone) level until 2015. Therefore all such properties were grouped under 'vacant' dwellings until 2014 at council area level and until 2015 at data zone level. Separate figures on second homes were not available for East Renfrewshire until 2012 and Renfrewshire until 2013. When comparing these figures with earlier years, second homes should be included in the 'vacant dwellings' category in order to have consistent figures for comparisons over time. As councils can now choose not to apply a council tax discount in relation to second homes it is possible that in future it will become more difficult to source statistical information on them from Council Tax systems. In 2017, figures on second homes were not available for Aberdeen City, City of Edinburgh and West Dunbartonshire. These were therefore estimated from data for 2016. However, for 2018 and 2019 only West Dunbartonshire was unable to provide second home data.

6.3.5 NRS collection of neighbourhood statistics on occupied and vacant dwellings

The Ctaxbase report, which is used by NRS to produce household estimates for Scotland and its 32 council areas (Table 1), only provides figures at council area level. In order to produce statistics about occupied and vacant dwellings for smaller geographic areas, NRS collects equivalent data from Council Tax systems at neighbourhood (data zone) level. This collection is carried out in September each year to align with the timing of the Ctaxbase collection. The neighbourhood data is available from the [NRS website](#) and [statistics.gov.scot](#).

¹⁸ A 'headship rate' is the proportion of adults within a particular age and gender group who are a 'head of household'. 'Head of household' is defined as the first adult recorded on a census form. More information can be found in '[Household Projections for Scotland, 2016-based](#)' on the NRS website.

¹⁹ The mid-year population estimates re-based to Scotland's Census 2011 have been used.

For a number of council areas, the totals from summing data zone figures do not exactly match the council area figures from 'Ctaxbase'. For example, some dwellings on the Council Tax systems have missing or invalid postcode information. In 2020, this varied from all dwellings in a council area having a valid postcode to around 0.09% of dwellings with missing or invalid postcodes. The postcode is used to identify the data zone, so a dwelling without a postcode will not be included in the data zone level figures. In most cases where there are differences, councils have confirmed that the Ctaxbase figures will be more accurate, so the data zone figures are constrained to the Ctaxbase totals for each council area.

A small number of councils have told us that the data zone level total for a particular category is more accurate than the Ctaxbase figure. In such cases, we use the data zone total in both the neighbourhood statistics and council area household estimates.

New regulations on Council Tax for unoccupied properties were introduced in 2013. These have had an impact on the neighbourhood data collected by NRS and on the council area level data collected through Ctaxbase (although to a lesser extent). The new regulations gave councils the power to vary the charges applied to some vacant properties which were classed as 'long-term empty'. Many councils have now made changes to how they charge such properties, including introducing a levy. These changes have led to new categories being added to some billing systems which are not always properly picked up when our neighbourhood data is extracted. Some councils are also struggling with how the data on such properties is extracted from their system, even when no new categories have been introduced. Some councils have experienced similar issues when extracting their Ctaxbase returns. This has had an impact on the quality of the neighbourhood data from 2013 onwards. NRS has continued to work with colleagues in councils to resolve some of these issues.

6.3.6 Dwelling estimates from the Assessors' Portal ([Tables 8, 10, 12 and 14](#))

The [Scottish Assessors](#) are responsible for valuing property for Council Tax purposes. They maintain their web-based [Scottish Assessors' Portal](#), which contains details of every dwelling in Scotland along with its Council Tax band.

NRS uses data from the Assessors' Portal to publish information on the number of dwellings in each data zone in Scotland along with information about the Council Tax band. This information is based on an extract of the Assessors' Portal database taken around December or January each year.

Summary information on dwellings produced using data from the Assessors' Portal for 2020 is included in [Tables 8, 10, 12 and 14](#) relating to this publication. Information for each data zone is available from the '[Small Area Statistics on Households and Dwellings](#)' section of the NRS website and will be made available through the [statistics.gov.scot](#) website. We tend to use the Assessors' Portal data, rather than the our neighbourhood level collection of Council Tax data, for the total number of dwellings in a data zone because every dwelling has been assigned a postcode and as a result can be allocated to a data zone. (As discussed above, a small percentage of dwellings in the Council Tax data have missing or invalid postcodes and therefore cannot be assigned to a data zone). However, we use information from council tax records to produce estimates of number of dwellings in local authorities and Scotland as a whole (Table 2).

6.3.7 Valuations of dwellings and Council Tax Band

It is important for the interpretation of these statistics to note that the Council Tax band reflects the Assessor's opinion of open market value, subject to a number of statutory assumptions. Assessors base their opinion of value on the actual selling prices of similar properties, which sold around the valuation date of 1 April 1991. More information about this can be found on the [Scottish Assessors' Association](#) website.

Definitions of dwelling types

Category	Description
All dwellings	This is the total number of dwellings on the Council Tax valuation list (excluding free-standing private lock-ups and garages). A 'dwelling' refers to the accommodation itself, for example a house or a flat, and includes second homes that are not let out commercially. Caravans count as dwellings if they are someone's main home.
Council Tax bands	Each dwelling is placed in one of eight Council Tax bands (A to H), with dwellings in band H being the most expensive. The Council Tax band reflects the Assessor's opinion of open market value, subject to a number of statutory assumptions. Assessors base their opinion of value on the actual selling prices of similar properties which sold around the valuation date of 1 April 1991.
Dwellings per hectare	This variable has been calculated by dividing the total number of dwellings by the area in hectares, as determined by a NRS in-house measure.
Type of dwelling (latest available data relates to 2017)	<p>This information is based on 'attachment' – i.e. the type of property in relation to its degree of attachment to surrounding properties. This information has been aggregated into five categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detached; • semi-detached; • terraced; • flat, maisonette or apartment; and • not known – in some areas, this information is not available via the Assessors' Portal for every dwelling.
Number of rooms (latest available data relates to 2017)	<p>In the Assessors' Portal, this is defined as the number of habitable rooms (usually bedrooms and living rooms). This is different to the census definition, which includes kitchens. There may be some differences between different Assessors' areas in the way in which this information is recorded. For example, differences could arise in the treatment of open plan areas, dining rooms, kitchens and kitchenettes.</p> <p>This information on number of rooms may not always represent the most up to date position. Assessors are only able to reflect physical changes and alterations to dwellings once they have been sold and a reconsideration of the banding has taken place.</p> <p>Information on the number of rooms is not available for most dwellings in Shetland. No information is separately available for dwellings with seven or more rooms in Dumfries and Galloway.</p>

6.3.8 Information on household types from the Scottish Household Survey

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is used to estimate the number of households of each type in Scotland as a whole ([Table 7](#)). More information about the [Scottish Household Survey](#) is available on the Scottish Government website.

The estimates of the number of households of each type obtained from the SHS are adjusted so that the total number of households is equal to the NRS household estimate figure in each year. Adjustments are also made to account for differences between the distributions of household types taken from Scotland's Census 2001 and 2011 and from the 2001 and 2011 SHS. This is to account for any biases in the SHS data introduced as a result of some household types being more likely to take part in the survey than others. The SHS figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

6.4 Interpreting the data

NRS household estimates use data on occupied dwellings taken from Council Tax systems. Although an occupied dwelling is roughly equivalent to a household, the number of occupied dwellings can differ from the number of households recorded by the census. One reason is that some dwellings may be shared by more than one household; each household would be counted by the census but only the dwelling would be counted in Council Tax data. Another reason is that certain communal establishments (for example student halls of residence) will be included in the count of occupied dwellings from Council Tax systems but would not be classified as households in the census. The occupied dwellings figures are adjusted to account for differences between Council Tax data and the census. However, as we move further from the most recent census this may not fully account for the discrepancies. No such adjustment is applied to the neighbourhood (data zone) level data on occupied dwellings.

Household and dwelling estimates are drawn from administrative data sources relating to Council Tax. There are limitations in using administrative sources to produce statistics. Small differences can arise in the definitions used for various categories of households/dwellings in the administrative systems. It is also possible that not all information held on the systems is up-to-date. For example, councils may not be notified immediately of a change in the circumstances of a household which affects eligibility for a Council Tax discount or exemption. Furthermore, it may take time for changes as a result of new building or demolition to be recorded.

Changes over time in categories of Council Tax discounts and exemptions can occur because a council area has carried out a review and identified cases where a dwelling has been incorrectly categorised. This can sometime result in changes in the overall numbers of occupied and vacant dwellings. There can also be variations in the ways that some councils classify vacant properties and second homes between different years. Until 2013 the effect on the percentages of dwellings which are vacant or second homes each year in a council area would most likely have been small.

From 2013 onwards, many councils have carried out re-classification exercises of vacant dwellings and second homes, alongside making changes to their systems to reflect new legislation surrounding such properties introduced in 2013. The definitions of a second home and a vacant property classed as 'long-term empty' were also changed with the introduction of the new legislation, leading to some dwellings switching between these categories. Users are advised to note these differences when analysing the figures. In particular, changes in the rate of growth in household numbers from 2013 onwards are not simply due to growth in the number of dwellings. Instead they are also the result of

apparent variations in the number of second homes and vacant properties. The reasons for the variations differ depending on the year but are largely due to re-classification of properties as a result of the 2013 legislation, either following a review of such properties or simply because their definitions have changed.

At neighbourhood (data zone) level, changes over time can occur not only as a result of new building activity and demolition, but also because of changes related to the postcodes of dwellings. Postcode changes can occur due to improvements made to administrative systems or NRS data cleaning, reallocating postcodes which were previously allocated to an incorrect neighbourhood. Differences can also occur when postcodes are allocated to a different neighbourhood because the distribution of their population has changed. These differences are likely to be minimal and have only a small effect on change over time, except when looking at small numbers of data zones.

6.5 Average household size

Average household size is calculated using the mid-year household estimates ([Table 1](#)), the mid-year population estimates²⁰, and communal establishment rates from Scotland's Census 2001 and 2011.

The first stage is to calculate the number of people living in private households (the 'private household population') rather than in communal establishments, such as student halls of residence, prisons or care homes. This is done by applying the communal establishment rates to the mid-year population estimates to estimate the communal establishment population, and subtracting this population from the mid-year population estimate. Communal establishment rates for 2002 to 2010 are estimated from the rates from Scotland's Census 2001 and 2011. The communal establishment rates from Scotland's Census 2011 are used from 2012 onwards.

The second stage is to estimate average household size by dividing the private household population by the mid-year household estimate.

In general all numbers quoted in the text of this publication are rounded to the nearest hundred and all percentages to one decimal place.

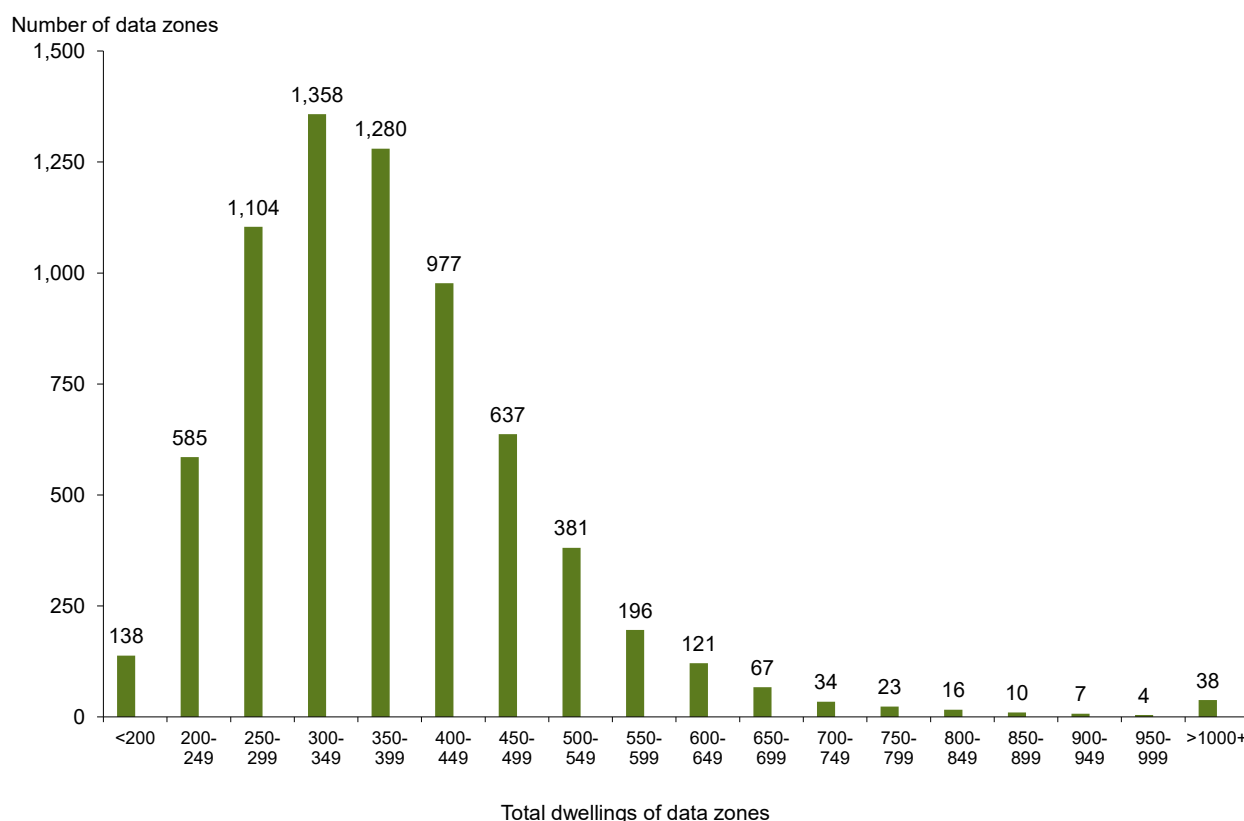
²⁰ National Records of Scotland's '[Population Estimates Time Series Data](#)' available from the NRS website.

6.6 2011 Data Zones

The Scottish Government published a new set of data zone boundaries in November 2014²¹, based on the results of the 2011 Census. There is a total of 6,976 data zones covering the whole of Scotland. Aside from Scotland and council area, the geographies used in this publication are based on aggregations of these data zones. Unfortunately we cannot produce a back series of the neighbourhood data on occupied and vacant dwellings using the 2011 data zone boundaries. This is because until the 2014 collection, not all council areas provided us with postcode level information. We use postcode data as the building blocks for data zones, and so without that data we cannot re-aggregate up to 2011 data zones. However, as Assessors' Portal data is available at postcode level, we will be able to produce a back series of this data on dwellings, using the 2011 data zone boundaries. This back series will be published in due course.

Following a boundary review, eight postcodes were transferred from Glasgow City to North Lanarkshire with effect from 1 April 2019. As a result data zone S01010117 (Garthamlock, Auchinlea and Gartloch – 05) was split between the two council areas with approximately 150 dwellings transferring from Glasgow to North Lanarkshire. These dwellings have been correctly accounted for in the council totals but are still assigned to the S01010117 data zone in the small area data.

Figure 15: Distribution of data zones by number of dwellings, 2020



²¹ Scottish Government [Small Area Statistics Reference Material](#)

Out of the total of 6,976 data zones ([Figure 15](#)):

- 138 (2%) had fewer than 200 dwellings;
- 3,047 (44%) had between 200 and 349 dwellings;
- 2,894 (42%) had between 350 and 499 dwellings;
- 859 (12%) had between 500 and 999 dwellings;
- 38 (0.5%) had 1,000 or more dwellings.

The average (median) number of dwellings per data zone for Scotland was 361.

The council area with the highest average number of dwellings per data zone was Na-h Eileanan Siar (405), while the council area with the lowest average was East Renfrewshire (311).

6.6.1 Data zones with less than 200 dwellings:

Of the 138 data zones with less than 200 dwellings, three (all in Glasgow City) were estimated to have no dwellings in 2020, reflecting building demolitions since the time of the 2011 Census. These low dwelling data zones are present in all but four council areas: Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney Islands, Scottish Borders, Shetland Islands.

Council area	Number of data zones
Glasgow City	13
South Lanarkshire	11
Aberdeenshire	10
West Lothian	10
Others	<10

More than the two thirds of these low density data zones are in the least deprived areas, i.e. 92 data zones were in SIMD deciles 8-10.

SIMD decile	Number of data zones
1 = most deprived	2
2	3
3	3
4	6
5	8
6	9
7	15
8	22
9	37
10 = least deprived	33

Urban/Rural classification	Number of data zones
Large urban areas	35
Other urban areas	70
Accessible small towns	15
Remote small towns	1
Accessible rural areas	11
Remote rural areas	6

6.6.2 Data zones with more than 1,000 dwellings:

Of the 38 data zones with 1,000 or more dwellings, four have more than 1,500 dwellings. Three of these were located in Glasgow City in areas close to the Universities, so it is likely that the high number of dwellings reflects the presence of student accommodation.

The proportion of dwellings with occupied exemptions (a proxy for student accommodation) for these three areas ranged between 68% and 86%, compared with median values for Glasgow City and Scotland of 2.9%, and 1.2% respectively.

Council area	Number of data zones
Glasgow City	14
City of Edinburgh	8
Renfrewshire	3
East Lothian	2
North Lanarkshire	
West Lothian	
Aberdeen City	1
Dundee City	
East Dunbartonshire	
East Renfrewshire	
Midlothian	
Moray	
South Lanarkshire	
Other council areas	0

32 of these data zones are in urban areas, two in small towns and four in rural areas. One (Dalmeny, Kirkliston and Newbridge – 06) in City of Edinburgh Council is categorised as being in an ‘accessible small town’. The large number of dwellings is likely due to armed forces accommodation (the proportion of dwellings in the data zone that are occupied exemptions is relatively high at 6.7%). The other data zone in East Lothian is categorised as being in a “remote small town”. The remaining data zones in Moray, North Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire are categorised in as being in an ‘accessible rural’ area. One data zone in East Lothian is categorised in as being in a “remote rural area”. The large number of dwellings is likely due to new housing developments in the areas.

SIMD decile	Number of data zones
1 = most deprived	2
2	3
3	2
4	2
5	1
6	7
7	7
8	9
9	4
10 = least deprived	1

Urban/Rural classification	Number of data zones
Large urban areas	27
Other urban areas	5
Accessible small towns	1
Remote small towns	1
Accessible rural areas	3
Remote rural areas	1

6.7 Urban Rural classification

The Scottish Government produces an Urban Rural classification, which is based on settlement size defined by NRS and accessibility based on drive-time analysis. An Urban Rural classification is provided for each data zone in Scotland. 2011 Data Zones have been used as the building blocks for the Urban Rural analysis. This year’s publication uses

Scottish Government's latest Urban Rural classification, 2016, which was published in March 2018²².

There are six urban and rural classification categories, shown below:

Scottish Government Urban Rural classification	
1 Large Urban Areas	Settlements of 125,000 people and over.
2 Other Urban Areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 124,999 people.
3 Accessible Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
4 Remote Small Towns	Settlements of between 3,000 and 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
5 Accessible Rural	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
6 Remote Rural	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.

Source: [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2016](#)

6.8 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (SIMD) is produced by the Scottish Government to identify concentrations of deprivation across Scotland in a consistent way. It is based on 38 indicators in seven domains: Current Income, Employment, Health, Education Skills and Training, Geographic Access to Services, Housing and Crime. A SIMD rank is produced for every data zone in Scotland. Based on this, the SIMD deciles are produced, from one (most deprived) to ten (least deprived). This publication uses the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 (SIMD 2020), building up estimates for each SIMD decile using data zone level information.

6.9 Strategic Development Plan (SDP) areas and National Parks

National Parks are protected areas of beautiful countryside, wildlife and cultural heritage. There are two National Parks in Scotland: Cairngorms National Park (CNP) and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LLTNP).

Strategic Development Plan (SDP) areas were created in 2008 to help deal with region-wide issues that cross boundaries of council areas, for example the scale of housing and the transport and water and connections needed. They are based on the four largest city regions:

- Aberdeen (Aberdeen City and Shire)
- Dundee (Dundee, Perth, Angus and North Fife - TAYplan)
- Edinburgh (Edinburgh and South East Scotland - SESplan)
- Glasgow (Glasgow and the Clyde Valley - Clydeplan)

Around three quarters of the population of Scotland live in Scotland's four SDP areas.

²² The publication '[Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2016](#)' is available on the Scottish Government (SG) website.

Under the 2019 Planning Act²³ the SDPAs remain in place until they are superseded by the National Planning Framework.

The household and dwelling information presented in [Tables 11 and 12](#) for this publication for SDP areas and National Parks is primarily built up from postcode level information. Before the 2017 publication, all estimates for SDP areas and National Parks were built up from council area and data zone level information.

7 Related publications and websites

Other household related topics can be found within the following websites.

Statistics.gov.scot

The statistics.gov.scot website contains information from this publication at data zone level. This includes the number of [dwellings by Council Tax band](#), [type of dwelling](#), [number of rooms per dwelling](#), [density of housing](#) and the [percentage of dwellings](#) which are occupied, vacant, second homes, entitled to a 'single adult' Council Tax discount, or an 'occupied exemption'. The statistics are available for 2001 Data Zones, 2011 Data Zones and aggregations of these data zones.

National Records of Scotland

National Records of Scotland (NRS) [Household Projections](#), available on the NRS website, are forward projections of the number of households in Scotland and each council area, for a 25 year period, broken down by household type and age group. The next set of projections (2018-based) was published in September 2020.

NRS population estimates and projections can be found in the '[Population](#)' section of the NRS website.

The latest NRS population projections for [Strategic Development Plan \(SDP\) areas and for Scotland's National Parks](#) and the latest [Household Projections](#) for these areas can also be found on the NRS website.

Scotland's Census

Results and information about Scotland's Census 2011 are available from the [Scotland's Census](#) website. This includes '[Household composition for specific groups of people in Scotland](#)', an analytical report published in August 2015 which looks at household composition data from the Scotland's Census 2011 Census and compares it to Scotland's Census 2001.

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government produces a range of statistics on housing in Scotland, including the number of new homes built each year and numbers of conversions and demolitions. These statistics are available from the [Housing Statistics for Scotland](#) website, and include an annual summary of the key trends in housing.

²³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents>.

Scottish Government [Planning Statistics](#), which include data on vacant and derelict land, can also be found on the Scottish Government website.

[Local Government Finance](#) statistics are available from the Scottish Government website. They include the 'Ctaxbase' form which is used as the basis for some of the statistics included in this publication.

Up-to-date information on the State of the Economy and a Monthly Economic Brief for Scotland can be found in the [Economy](#) section of the Scottish Government website.

Centre for Housing Market Analysis

The Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) is part of the Scottish Government's Communities Analysis Division. It provides support to councils and others to aid the strategic planning of housing in Scotland.

The CHMA's monthly 'Scottish Housing Market Review' collates a range of statistics on house prices, housing market activity, cost and availability of finance and repossessions. More information, including the bulletins themselves, can be found on the [CHMA](#) website.

Across the UK

The other UK countries produce estimates of households and dwellings (sometimes referred to as stock estimates) for their own areas. Information on the methods used in each country, including some points to consider when making comparisons, can be found on the NRS website in '[Household and Dwelling Estimates Across the UK](#)'. This paper was published in December 2011 and therefore won't incorporate any changes to how estimates are produced across the UK that may have been made since then.

A cross-government working group on housing statistics was established in early 2018 to increase collaboration across the UK. Its aim is to provide an improved coherent picture of the UK housing landscape for users of statistics on this topic. Further information on the work of this working group is available on the [Government Statistical Service](#) website.

Scottish Government Statistics User and Provider Consultation Network (ScotStat)

You can register with the Scottish Government's [ScotStat website](#) to receive notification of forthcoming household estimates and projections publications. By registering you will also receive other updates relating to these statistics, including notifications of user consultations. You can also choose to receive notifications relating to other areas of Scottish Official statistics.

Notes on statistical publications

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in line with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (available on the [UKSA](#) website).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is National Records of Scotland's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in May 2011.

Information on background and source data

Further details on data source(s), timeframe of data and timeliness, continuity of data, accuracy, etc can be found in the About this Publication document that is published alongside this publication on the NRS website.

National Records of Scotland

We, the National Records of Scotland, are a non-ministerial department of the devolved Scottish Administration. Our aim is to provide relevant and reliable information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland. We do this as follows:

Preserving the past – We look after Scotland's national archives so that they are available for current and future generations, and we make available important information for family history.

Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.

Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

You can get other detailed statistics that we have produced from the [Statistics](#) section of our website. Scottish Census statistics are available on the [Scotland's Census](#) website.

We also provide information about [future publications](#) on our website. If you would like us to tell you about future statistical publications, you can register your interest on the Scottish Government [ScotStat website](#).

You can also follow us on twitter [@NatRecordsScot](#)

Enquiries and suggestions

Please contact our Statistics Customer Services if you need any further information.

Email: statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

If you have comments or suggestions that would help us improve our standards of service, please contact:

Alan Ferrier

Senior Statistician, National Records of Scotland

Email: alan.ferrier@nrscotland.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2021

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. Further information is available within the [Copyright and Disclaimer section](#) of the National Records of Scotland website.